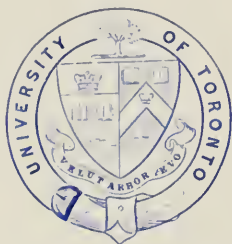


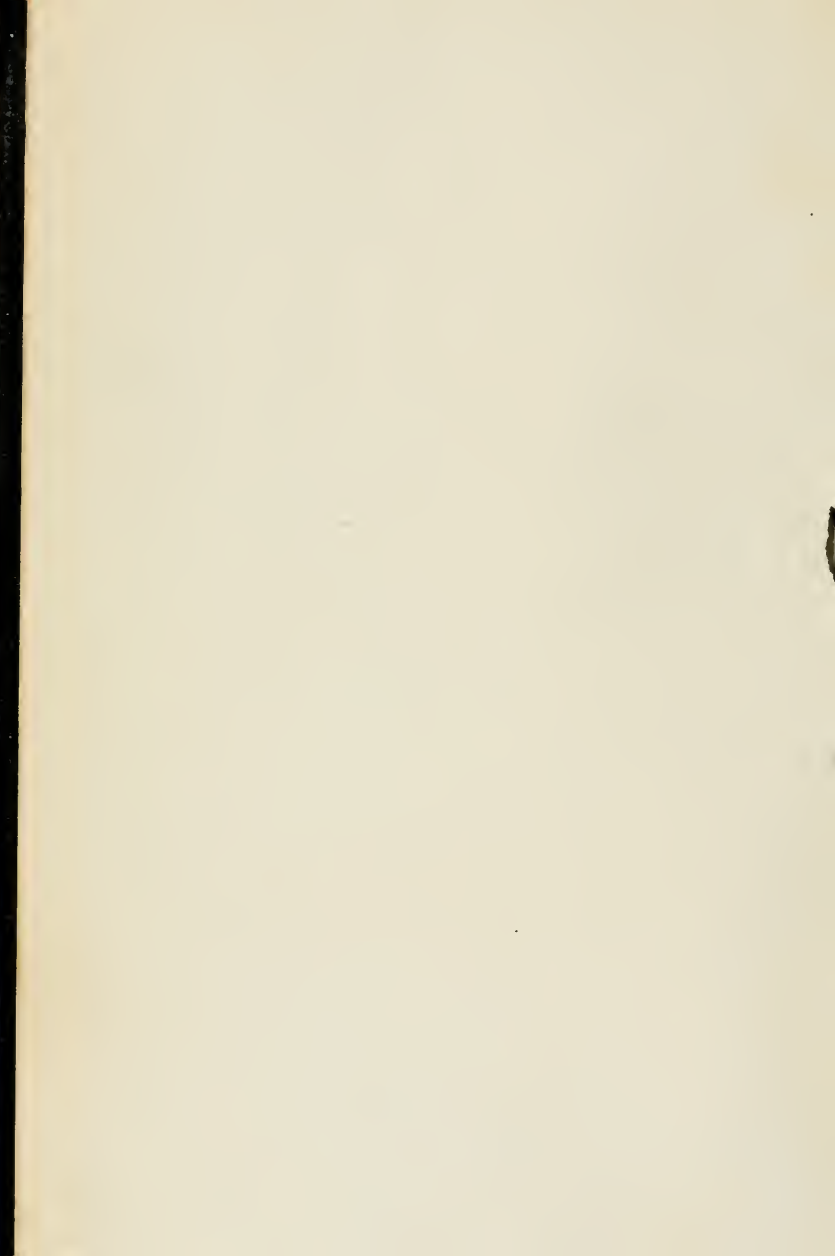
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# PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

ITS WRITINGS AND TEACHINGS IN  
THEIR HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

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# PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

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## DOCTRINAL AND HORTATORY WRITINGS OF THE CHURCH

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### THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE PROLOGUE AND THE EARLIER MINISTRY

THIS is a doctrinal work in the form of a Gospel. It uses historical material as a frame for the symbolic pictures in which it embodies the ideas of a Hellenised Paulinism. This historical material is drawn from the earlier Gospels of Mark and Luke, and another, which is not that of Matthew, but perhaps the Gospel according to the Hebrews or some similar apocryphal work. It is with the Gospel of Luke that the Johannine Gospel shows the closest connection, not only in many details, but in the whole arrangement of the material. Luke's three divisions—the first consisting of the Prologue and the Galilæan work of Jesus; the second, of the narrative of the journey and the controversies at Jerusalem; and the third, of the story of the Passion—correspond to the three main divisions of the Gospel of John, chapters i.–vi.,

vii.-xii., xiii.-xxi. It is, however, to be remarked at the outset that in filling in this scheme he diverges very freely from his model, everywhere treating the historical material, with the sovereign freedom characteristic of Hellenism, as only the symbolical expression of his religious ideas. This Gospel does not, therefore, belong to the historical books of primitive Christianity, but to its Hellenistic doctrinal writings; it is the ripest and richest fruit of the Hellenistic development of doctrine which began with the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Luke had declared in his preface that he purposed to describe "all things from the very first," and had therefore begun his prologue with the narratives of the conception and birth of John and of Jesus, and closed it with a genealogy of Jesus, which he carried back to Adam and to God. For the Fourth Evangelist that was at once too much and too little. Too much, because to him the earthly parentage of Jesus, not to speak of John, seemed to be of no importance; too little, because the heavenly origin of the Son of God did not appear to him sufficiently made manifest in the Lucan birth-story. On the ground of deutero-Pauline and Gnostic theology, it was for him a well-established tenet that Christ had come down from heaven and that He had been from all eternity the Son of God, that He had been the agent in the creation of the world and in all the subsequent revelation of God in Israel, and that in His heavenly essence He was one with that divine Intermediate Being which Jewish-Hellenistic speculation had earlier designated the Divine Wisdom, and later the personal Word of God, the Logos. This term, in which Philo had combined the ideas of the Jewish

“word of revelation” and the “Cosmic Reason” of the Stoics, was admirably adapted to be the watchword of that Christian Hellenism which was destined to unite Jewish beliefs and Greek thought in a new world-religion. In Ephesus especially, which had been the ancient home of the Heracleitic Logos theory, and was now the seat of Christian Gnosticism and Apocalyptic, the term Logos almost inevitably forced itself upon the Christian theologian as the most significant and widely intelligible expression for the higher nature of Christ as the mediator of all revelation of God, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” and through whom the primal mystery of all religion has at length been unveiled to the world (Col. ii. 3; Eph. iii. 4 f.). Accordingly, the Evangelist in his Prologue, which in this Gospel takes the place of the Lucan story of the Nativity, begins with some general statements about the primordial being of the Logos, in relation to God, to the world, and to mankind. “In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was in fellowship with God, and the Logos was a God; as such, he was in the beginning in fellowship with God. All things were made<sup>1</sup> through him, and without him nothing was made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not comprehended it” (i. 1-5). In these opening statements it is not the author’s purpose to inform the reader that there is a Logos, or what is to be understood

<sup>1</sup> The German, like the Greek, is more exactly “all things have come into being through him” (*alles ist durch ihn geworden*). But in view of the awkwardness of repeating this periphrasis, it is doubtless sufficient to note the fact.—TRANSLATOR.

thereby; this he assumes from the outset as already known and accepted. What he emphasises is that the Logos was already existing "in the beginning," in the pre-temporal eternity, before there was any other except God; just as in Prov. viii. 23 the Divine Wisdom says of itself, "The Lord set me up from everlasting, from the beginning, before he made the earth." He goes on to assert of this primordial Logos that he was in fellowship, in intimate relation, with God (*πρὸς τὸν θεόν*), and was himself generically God (*θεὸς* without the article; Philo similarly distinguishes the Logos as *θεὸς* from *ὁ θεός*). After the relation of the Logos to God has thus been defined as that of distinction of person, identity of essence, and living fellowship, and the latter point has once more been emphatically asserted (verse 2), then in verse 3 f. his relation to the world as mediator of creation is described. The reinforcing of the positive statement, "all things were made through him" by the negative "without him nothing was made that was made," is certainly not purposeless; the author desires to exclude, from the very outset, the Gnostic doctrine that the world was created by a number of subordinate spiritual beings (archons and æons). In contrast with all these he sets the Divine Logos as the sole mediating organ of God in the creation. A more doubtful point is whether the phrase "nothing that was made was made without him" is merely a pleonasm intended to enforce the thought, or whether it contains a suggestion of an uncreated matter, to be thought of as existing before the creation of the world. In support of the latter view it is possible to point to Gen. i. 2, where the Chaos is assumed as existing before the creative word of God,

and to Philo, who follows Plato in holding matter, as the negative, non-existent ( $\mu\eta\ \acute{\omicron}\nu$ ), to be the passive substrate of the active powers of the Logos, and at the same time as limiting its action and therefore as the cause of the imperfection of the world. The question naturally suggests itself whether our Evangelist shared this view of Philo's regarding the uncreated matter, and supposed it to be the originating cause of the darkness which offers resistance to the light of the Logos.<sup>1</sup> But not only has he nowhere said a single word about this, but, further, it is impossible not to recognise that he does not, like Philo, attribute men's love of darkness rather than light (iii. 19 f.) to the material nature of the corporeal world—the flesh is no doubt “unprofitable” (vi. 63), but not essentially the cause of evil. He attributes it rather to a quality characterising spiritual existence, which has its ultimate cause in a God-opposing power belonging to the spiritual world, in fact, in Satan (viii. 44). In this our Evangelist is far removed from Philo, in whose Hellenistic system of thought there was no room for the devil; but he is closely in touch with oriental Gnosticism, to the fundamental doctrines of which transcendental dualism belonged from the first. Now, as nothing is anywhere said of the origin of Satan, it would be preferable—if one were determined to find an allusion to the “uncreated” in verse 3—to refer it to Satan, rather than to matter.

In what sense the Logos was the mediator of creation is explained in verse 4, “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Life and light, as predicates of the creative Logos, are to be under-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Réville, *Le quatrième Évangile*, pp. 86 and 99; and, on the other side, Grill, *Untersuchung über das 4. Ev.*, i. 120, note.

stood in the most general sense. The Logos, to whom the Father has given to have life in himself (v. 26), is the mediator of that life to every creature; for men in particular he is the source of mental and spiritual life or "light," of the knowledge of truth and of God. Similarly, in Philo,<sup>1</sup> the Logos is spoken of as the sun, which illuminates mankind with the archetypal and incorporeal beams of the Source of reason, wherefore the human mind (*Nous*) is related to the Logos. The association of life and light, as manifestations of the Divine action, goes through the whole Old Testament from the story of the creation onwards—see especially Ps. xxxvi. 9, "With thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light do we see light."

But the light which goes forth from the Logos meets in the world with opposition on the part of the darkness. Of the cause of this darkness the Evangelist nowhere gives any explanation; he simply states it as a fact of universal experience: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (verse 5). This statement does not refer solely to the pre-Christian (or to the pre-Mosaic) period, with the meaning that the natural revelation of God in human reason did not suffice to give a true knowledge of God, so that the positive revelation, first in the Law and then in the Gospel, became necessary. But, on the other hand, it does not refer solely to the appearing of the light in Christ, and the opposition which He met with on the part of the Jews. It expresses a universal truth, which has its necessary basis in the metaphysical dualism

<sup>1</sup> *De Somn.*, i. 14-19 (M. i. 633-638); *Quis rer. div. hæres.*, xviii. (M. i. 506); *De opif. mund.*, viii. (M. i. 6).

of the Divine Logos and the un-divine world, and therefore is tragically manifest always and everywhere; in heathendom, among the Jews, and finally, and of course most impressively of all, in Christianity (notice the timeless *φαίνοι!*) There we have, struck at the outset, that note of tragedy which is so characteristic of our Gospel, the expression of a much deeper spirit of religious earnestness than any which shows itself in the optimistic world-picture of Hellenism, as we find it, for example, in Philo. Nevertheless precisely these opening sentences of our Gospel find a remarkable parallel in the old Greek thinker Heracleitus. In his famous work *On Nature* the following sentences occurred at the beginning: "Of this Logos, although it is eternal, men have no understanding, whether before they have heard of it or after; for although everything happens in accordance with this Logos, men are as though they were ignorant [of it]. Although the Logos is common [to all], the majority of men live as if they had an understanding of their own."<sup>1</sup> Here, too, we have the same tragic contrast: on the one hand the Logos, who is eternal, the regulative principle of all that comes to pass; on the other hand, the obstinate unreceptivity of men, whose unintelligence refuses to be taught, because they, not indeed all, but certainly the majority among them, prefer their own self-imagined wisdom to the truth of the Logos which is common to all. The resemblance between the beginning of the Johannine Gospel and this beginning of the work of Heracleitus is in fact so great that the hypothesis of a direct reference on the part of

<sup>1</sup> Diels, *Herakleitos von Ephesus* (with a German translation), 1901. Cf. Aall, *Geschichte der Logosidee*, i. 29.

the Ephesian Evangelist to the writings of his great countryman not unnaturally suggests itself.<sup>1</sup> From the timeless truths of the first five verses, which he puts at the beginning as the transcendental background of all the temporal events of his historical narrative, the Evangelist turns in verse 6 to the historical introduction to these events themselves: the appearance of John the Baptist as the forerunner and witness-bearer. He expressly emphasises the fact—perhaps with polemical intent as against the disciples of John—that John was not himself the light but only the precursor of the light. “The true light that lighteth every man [*i.e.* the Logos, verse 4] was about to come into the world” (his revelation in Jesus was, at the time when John appeared, close at hand). He was in the world (he had indeed always been there), and the world was made through him (the Logos), and yet the world knew him not. He came to his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, ii. 473 f.: “If we consider how popular the ideas of the Stoa were, and that the work of Heraclitus was eagerly read by Christians (Justin in *Apol.* I. xlvi. reckons Heraclitus a Christian because he had lived *μετὰ λόγον*), that the opening passage was particularly famous, and finally that the introduction to the Gospel was addressed to readers who were familiar with a Logos-doctrine, we are justified in advancing the conjecture that in one of the most imposing creations of the human spirit there is a direct and conscious reminiscence of that proem, so rich in far-reaching thoughts, of the Ephesian philosopher. But it is particularly interesting to notice how the Hellenistic conceptions are slightly influenced by Jewish-Hellenistic ideas. For the *ἀεὶ ὄντος* of Heraclitus, John puts *ἐν ἀρχῇ* because of Gen. i. 1; instead of the Logos which the deaf ears of men would not receive, he introduces *φῶς*, which is derived from the Jewish theosophy; into the quite Heraclitean saying ‘In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was God,’ he inserts ‘and the Logos was with God,’ which is not Stoic, but is derived from Jewish (-Hellenistic) conceptions.”



own possessions and his own people received him not. Whether these "possessions," again, refer to the world, that is, mankind, as having been created by the Logos, or to the people of Israel as belonging to him in a special sense, is doubtful. On the latter assumption many have proposed to refer verses 11 ff. to the pre-Christian revelation of the Logos in Israel, through Moses and the prophets, the revelation of the incarnate Logos-Christ only being reached in verse 14. But however this may simplify the connection of this verse, which thus marks the historical advance from the Old Testament revelation to the New, there are several difficulties in the way. If verse 11 is made still to refer to the revelation of the pre-existent Logos spoken of in verse 10 ("he was in the world"), the distinction, clearly marked by the change to the aorist ("he came"), is wiped out. This "came" ( $\eta\lambda\theta\epsilon\nu$ ) seems to refer to a definite historical fact, which can be no other than the "becoming flesh." And if verse 12 f. described the results of the Old Testament revelation, what more would remain for the Christian revelation to accomplish that should be new and greater than this? It is surely only the latter which is appropriately described in the significant words: "But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." To receive the Logos who has come in Christ is therefore to believe in his name, that is, on the significance of his Person, which lies in his name of Christ or of Son of God (xx. 31). Those who so believe are given the right to know themselves as children of God, because in the very

fact of their faith they possess the higher life which is derived from God, and not from the flesh (iii. 3 ff., xvii. 3 ; 1 John v. 1).

After this general description of the effect of the coming of the Logos, in both its aspects—rejection on the part of the great mass of his people, reception and becoming the children of God in the case of individuals—the fact of his coming, which has so far only been indicated, is now brought into prominence, and stated with the utmost precision (verse 14). “And (or “yea”—explaining and emphasising) the Logos became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory, a glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The Logos “became flesh,” that is, a corporeal man with flesh and blood such as we have (Heb. ii. 14). That this man is Jesus Christ, the subject of the subsequent history, is of course understood.

How, precisely, the Evangelist thought of this “becoming flesh”—whether as the transformation of the Logos into the soul of the embryo body of Jesus, so that He was born as the incarnate Logos; or whether he thought that the Logos as Spirit descended on the adult man Jesus and united itself with His Person to form a permanent unity—he does not more nearly inform us. He is concerned only to make it clear that the Jesus of history was the human manifestation of that Logos who as a Divine Being had pre-existed from the beginning in fellowship with God his Father, and who was the source of all the life and light of the world and of humanity.

The essential personality of the Logos remains the same after his becoming flesh as it was before, only the form of his existence is changed, in the sense that

he has clothed his Divine being in the garment of a human corporeal body which serves him as the organ of his revelation to men. This formula, "the Logos became flesh," therefore means essentially the same thing as that which is current in the Ignatian and Johannine letters, "the Son of God has come in the flesh." The superhuman or divine background of the historical Person of Christ is just as much a fixed datum for these Church teachers as for their Gnostic opponents; but whereas the latter more or less definitely denied the humanity of His Person, the former insist strongly that the humanity of Christ is no less true than His divinity, and that both are combined in the full unity of His Person, a thought which is more distinctly emphasised in the formula of the Evangelist than in any earlier one. In a certain sense it is no doubt true to say that it is not the God Logos but the Man Jesus whom the Evangelist makes the subject of his historical narrative (the former designation, indeed, does not occur again); but all the same, we are meant never to forget that this man, Jesus, is at the same time the incarnate God Logos. To state this with the utmost clearness is the precise object that he had in view in opening his work with this prologue; it is therefore not a mere introduction, which might as well have taken a different form, but the master-key to the whole Gospel.

That the earthly life of Jesus is only a brief episode in His heavenly pre- and post-existence is repeatedly declared, according to the Evangelist, by Jesus Himself (*cf.* esp. xvii. 24), and it is hinted even in i. 14 by the expression "he tabernacled" (pitched his tent like a traveller) "among us." In a similar way Jewish

legend had made the Glory of God dwell as a radiance above the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, and the Wisdom-Teaching made the Divine Wisdom pitch her tent in the Jewish people (Eccles. xxiv. 8; it is otherwise in Enoch xlii. 2<sup>1</sup>). The body of Jesus was therefore the temporary earthly dwelling of the Divine Logos, and at the same time the means of revealing his glory to those who were able, with the eye of faith, to behold, through the outward appearance, his true inner being.

What was thus beheld was his "glory," a glory such as was only possible in the case of Him who came as the only-begotten from the Father, and in accordance with this Divine origin was possessed of all the fulness of the Divine grace and truth. The expression "only-begotten" (*μονογενής*) is to be understood in verse 14 exactly as in verse 18; not, that is, as a mere figure taken from human sonship and applied to Christ, but as a Christological *terminus technicus* for the unique Divine Sonship of Christ, the incarnate Logos. This term is not found in Philo, who speaks, indeed, of the Logos as the "first-born" (*πρωτόγονος*), but not as the "only-begotten." It was not, however, newly coined by the Evangelist, but, like the term Logos, is introduced as an expression already known to and current among his readers. The explanation of that is simply that it was widely used in the vocabulary of the Gnostics. We may recall especially that in the Gnosis of Cerinthus, which, according to Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.*, III. xi. 1), John was directly opposing, the "Monogenes" seems to have played a peculiar rôle as the father of the Logos. That being so, the Evangelist had a special interest in emphatically

<sup>1</sup> Quoted above, vol. iii. p. 100.—TRANSLATOR.

asserting at the outset that the Logos incarnated in Christ was himself the Monogenes, and was derived, and had received his glory, immediately from the Father-God Himself.

This glory is more exactly described as the fulness of grace and truth. These two terms have nothing in common with the "goodness and truth" (faithfulness) of Exod. xxxiv. 6 beyond, perhaps, a verbal reminiscence; they refer back to verse 4, where Life and Light are declared to be the two Cosmic activities of the pre-existent Logos. Here, in the case of the incarnate Logos-Christ, these two terms receive their more definitely religious significance: grace is the Divine life, communicating itself through Christ's word and spirit (vi. 63), producing in the believer new and eternal life; truth is the Divine light which, shining forth from Christ, produces the highest, perfect knowledge of God. Here, as elsewhere in this Evangelist, the term "truth" has not a subjective sense, whether moral or logical, but an objective and ontological sense; it denotes that which Plato calls the truly existing (*ὄντως ὄν*), Philo's "ideal world" (*κόσμος νοητός*), the "common Reason" (*λόγος κοινός*) of Heracleitus, the "heavenly things" (*τὰ ἐπουράνια*) of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul's "that which is spiritual," and John's "that which is from above," or "from God." Therefore, He in whom the Divine light and life have appeared in human flesh can say of Himself "I am the truth," and therefore also, through Him, truth has not only been taught but has *become actual* (*ἐγένετο*, verse 17), that is, has come to manifestation and become an object of experience to men.

Whereon, then, does this faith rest? What

evidence is there for it? In the first place, that of John the Baptist (verse 15), who, as he before testified of the coming light (verse 8 f.), now testified of it as come; by recognising in Jesus, Him who, though coming after him, is nevertheless before him in greatness and significance, because He has already *been* before him, namely, as the pre-existent Logos (of which, however, the historic Baptist could have had no knowledge). This first testimony is immediately supported by the continuous testimony of the whole Christian community (verse 16), for it is conscious of having received the higher life which characterises it from the "fulness" of Christ, and, moreover, grace for grace—ever new and enhanced experiences of His gracious, life-giving activity. The expression "fulness" (πλήρωμα) reminds us, no doubt, of Philo's statement that God has wholly filled the Logos with Divine powers, but it is not found in exactly the same form in him; it doubtless belongs to the regular terminology of Gnosticism, which was probably also the source whence it had earlier passed into the deutero-Pauline Epistles (Colossians and Ephesians). It is especially to be remembered that according to the Gnostic teaching of Cerinthus, which John was opposing, the higher Christ-Spirit which had descended upon Jesus left Him again before His Passion and "flew back to its *pleroma*" (its Divine source). Here, as everywhere in Gnosticism, the *pleroma* is the Divine world, which was not really and permanently present in Jesus, but remained for him always something transcendent, in the Beyond. In opposition to this, the Evangelist declares it to be a fact of Christian experience that the fulness of the Divine life was present in Jesus as His *personal*

*possession*, this being proved by the fact that all Christians receive out of it "grace for grace." With this last expression we may compare Philo, *De Poster. Caini*, xliii., where it is similarly said of God that He constantly bestows new gifts of grace (*ἀεὶ νέας ἀντὶ παλαιωτέρων*).

It is precisely this experience of the Christian community which is the new thing that gives it its advantage over the ancient Covenant people: for "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (verse 17). Whereas Philo had made the Mosaic law itself the richest gift of Divine Grace, the Christian Hellenist contrasts with it, as the specifically new and higher thing, the revelation which came through Jesus Christ of life-giving grace and light-giving truth. In thus emphasising the originality and absoluteness of the Christian religion he is in opposition to Judaism and Jewish Hellenism, but in agreement with Gnosticism. But he is at variance again with the latter in treating the Mosaic law, not as something un-divine, a mere invention of God-opposing spiritual powers, but rather as a *relatively* true, because preparatory, revelation of the same Logos who as pre-existent was already present and working in the world (verse 8), and especially had made the people of Israel his own possession (verse 9), in order here to prepare for himself a vantage-ground for his personal coming and the bringing of salvation (*cf.* iv. 22). In this way he leaves to the Law and the prophets their status as a Divine revelation, but at the same time he Christianises them by interpreting them as a preparatory and prophetic revelation of the same Logos who first came to a complete manifestation in Christ (*cf.* v. 46 and xii.

41). Throughout, therefore, we see the Evangelist in constant touch both with Philo and with the Gnosticism of his time, but always correcting the one by the other, and subordinating both to that which he regards as the essence of the Christian revelation and as the objective truth corresponding to the faith of the Christian community. That this, and this only, fulfils and supersedes all previous religions, speculative philosophies, and mystery-cults, is affirmed at the close of the prologue (verse 18): "No man has seen God at any time, but the only-begotten Son<sup>1</sup> who lay in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." Since God is far beyond man's ken, the only possible way of attaining to the truth of a full knowledge of God and fellowship with God has been disclosed by Him who, being the Logos made flesh, stood from the beginning in the unique relation towards God of the Son, consubstantial, and united in the closest fellowship, with the Father. Thus the prologue returns at its close to the same point from which it started. In taking as his point of departure the primordial Divine Logos the Evangelist has no other purpose than to lay it down that Jesus Christ, the subject of the ensuing historical narrative, was the human manifestation of the Divine Logos, of Life and of Light, that in Him all earlier imperfect revelation comes to its fulfilment, and truth, consisting of a perfect knowledge of God, is definitively made known; and that, therefore, whoever believes in this Son of God has

<sup>1</sup> The reading—whether *μονογενής υἱός* or *θεός*—is still a matter of controversy. Practically the point is without importance, for this *μονογενής* is in any case identical with the *λόγος*, who in verse 1 is described as *θεὸς πρὸς τὸν θεόν*,



eternal life (xx. 31). Thus the prologue is not an unessential prefatory statement, standing in no inner connection with the rest of the Gospel, but the indispensable key to the understanding of all that follows. It is the prelude announcing the themes which are afterwards to be elaborated, with numerous variations, throughout the whole of the Gospel.

Following out a suggestion taken from Luke iii. 15 f. the Evangelist in i. 19 ff. represents the Baptist as making a declaration, in answer to a deputation of priests from Jerusalem, that he was not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet (expected as the fore-runner; *cf.* Mark viii. 28), but only the voice of a preacher in the desert who was sent to make smooth the way of the Lord and prepare for the Messianic time of salvation. He himself was only baptizing with water, but already there was standing unrecognised among them One who was to come after him (the Messiah), of whom he was not worthy to unloose the sandal-thongs. The Evangelist has here adopted the characterisation of the Baptist which was familiar from the Synoptic tradition, but with some variations. It is surprising, and in contradiction with Matt. xvii. 13 and xi. 9 f., that the office of the second Elijah, or "the prophet," is here denied to the Baptist, probably on account of the embittered polemic against the school of the "disciples of John" which stood in rivalry with the Church.<sup>1</sup> Another new thing is the statement that He who is to come after the Baptist is already standing among the people

<sup>1</sup> This motive, on which Baldensperger lays stress in his *Prolog des 4ten Evangelium*, is probably rightly recognised in the first three chapters, but it ought not to be made the main motive of the whole Gospel.

without their recognising Him. This knowledge on the part of the Baptist is no doubt explained by the sign at the baptism, mentioned in verse 33 ff., but is very difficult to reconcile with the older tradition of the doubting question which the Baptist addressed to Jesus (Matt. xi. 2 f.). Finally, it is noteworthy that the threatenings of vengeance in the Synoptic account of the Baptist's preaching are omitted by the Fourth Evangelist. The Jewish preacher of repentance, and head of a rival school, has here become the humble and believing witness to the deepest doctrinal mysteries of Christianity. For in the incident narrated in verse 29 ff. the Evangelist makes the Baptist, when he sees Jesus coming to him, utter the confession that "this is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and that this is He who "was before him," that is, the pre-existent Son of God, upon whom he had seen the Spirit descending, and whom a voice from God had testified to be the Messiah who was to baptize with the Spirit.

How the Baptist could have come into possession of this Christological knowledge it would be difficult to understand, even if the vision at the baptism of Jesus had really been seen by him. But if, in addition to this, we consider that even the occasion of this miraculous sign from heaven is left obscure, since not a word is said about Jesus being baptized by John, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the story of the baptism in the older tradition was known to the author, and has been purposely obscured and relegated to the background by him. The explanation of this is no doubt to be found in the same apologetic motive which is already at work in the Matthæan version of the Baptism-story—that of

depriving opponents of the argument drawn from the apparent subordination of the baptized to the baptizer. Hence, in Matthew, the initial refusal of the Baptist to baptize Jesus, as his superior; while here, as a further development, the baptism of Jesus by John is entirely passed over, and only the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus as the Divine attestation or establishment of His Divine Sonship is solemnly witnessed by the Baptist.

The third act of the Johannine witness-bearing, i. 35 ff., gives the impulse to the first disciples to become followers of Jesus. Here, again, our Evangelist completely diverges from his predecessors. According to Mark i. 16 ff. it was Jesus Himself who directly called the first disciples, here their call is mediated by John the Baptist, from whose discipleship the first disciples of Jesus are drawn; in Mark the scene is by the Lake of Gennesareth in Galilee, here the Judæan district about the Jordan, where John was baptizing; there the first disciples are the two pairs of brothers Peter and Andrew, James and John, who are called on the same occasion, here the first disciples are Andrew and another (the unnamed "disciple whom Jesus loved"). It is only afterwards, through Andrew, that Peter is brought to Jesus; then Philip is called, and through him Nathanael, who does not appear at all in the earlier Gospels.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In view of the name signifying the same as "Matthew" (viz. gift of God), it may be supposed that the Evangelist thought *primarily* of him. But why, instead of giving him his traditional name, did he rebaptize him "Nathanael"? Did he perhaps intend an allusion, in this new disciple name, to the last-called of the Apostles, who had been a true "gift of God" for the Church, and in spite of all Jewish misrepresentation was yet "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile," namely, Paul? An allegorical

Since in both accounts the call is represented as both a first and definitive call, upon which those who have been called become permanent followers of Jesus, it is not possible to refer the two narratives to different historical events; the contradiction is of such a kind that only one of the two can be historical. But that this can only be the earlier, Synoptic, account, is clear, for the Johannine representation of the call of the first disciples is connected in the closest possible fashion with the rôle assigned in this Gospel to John the Baptist as the first witness of Christ on His appearance; but that this rôle is perfectly unhistorical we have already to some extent seen, and we shall find it made still more clear later on. Improbable as it is that the first disciples of Jesus, those fishermen of the Lake of Galilee, were former disciples of John the Baptist, it is easy to understand how the Ephesian author of the Fourth Gospel came to represent matters thus. As we may conclude from Acts xix. 1 ff., there was in Ephesus a school of followers of John the Baptist to which an Alexandrian like Apollos had belonged before his conversion to Christianity; and in which, therefore, there was doubtless cultivated a Jewish-Hellenistic theosophy, in rivalry with the Christian-Hellenistic theology. And just as Apollos in earlier times had passed over from the School of John to the Christian Church, so in later times similar transitions were probably not infrequent; and it is not unnatural to conjecture that the author of our Gospel may himself have been one of these converted members of the School of John in Ephesus. Such events of his own time, and perhaps name capable of a double interpretation would not be impossible in the Fourth Evangelist.

of his own life-history, served him as the model for his picture of the call of the first disciples. That also gives the simplest explanation of his evident interest in John the Baptist and his obvious endeavour to make him not only the forerunner but a personal witness to the Divine mission and unique greatness of Christ. Thus we have here at the outset an indication—and many more will meet us later on—that the historical background of the Gospel is constructed, not so much from reminiscences of the life of Jesus, as from experiences in the life of the Church of the second century.

That Christianity bears the same relation to Judaism as mercy and truth do to the Law has already been declared by the Evangelist in i. 17; he now feels moved to embody this cardinal conviction in two outward incidents, in the first of which he introduces Christ as the bestower of vivifying grace, and in the second as the bearer of the truth, which judges and condemns Jewish hypocrisy. In the story (ii. 1–11) of the changing of water into wine at the marriage in Cana every unprejudiced reader will recognise an allegory, the fine significance of which would be spoilt by any attempt to explain it as an actual occurrence by the artifices of rationalising exposition—or imposition.<sup>1</sup> The result of such an attempt is, after all, to save only an outward shell of more than doubtful worth while losing in the process the real pearl of price within. For this allegory truly contains such a pearl, the thought, namely, that Christ puts in the place of the insipid and powerless ceremonial system of Judaism (the

<sup>1</sup> *Aus- und Einlegung*—the latter in the sense of reading in what is not there.—TRANSLATOR.

water of the vessels of purification) the Gospel spirit of joy and power (wine), and by the fulness of this heavenly blessing has quenched all earthly need. The elements from which this allegory is constructed are not to be sought in the miracle-stories of the Old Testament, but primarily in the Gospel parables — in the frequent comparison of the Messianic Kingdom with a marriage feast, and, especially, in the words in which Jesus rejected the suggestion that His disciples ought to fast (Mark ii. 19–22 = Luke v. 34–39). There the joy of the disciples in the presence of Jesus is compared with that of the guests at a marriage feast; and then follows the significant image of the new wine in the old wine-skins, illustrating the irreconcilability of the new spirit of the Gospel with the old Jewish forms. Here are given almost all the ideas (marriage, joy, insufficiency, old forms, new wine) out of which the Hellenistic Evangelist might compose his allegory.<sup>1</sup> Then, too, the saying of Jesus (ii. 4), “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come,” loses all its offence on the allegorical view, according to which it is not the Son speaking to the mother, but the Divine Logos-Christ to the theocratic community of Israel, pointing it to the future hour of His death as the source of all true salvation, of which the present gift of wine is only the sensible image, in accordance with the fundamental principle of Alexandrianism that transitory

<sup>1</sup> Even the critical remark of the ruler of the feast (ii. 10) about the good wine and the worse, is clearly suggested by the closing words added in Luke about the old and the new wine (Luke v. 39), though here also the material has been treated with the utmost freedom.

things are merely symbolic.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, this symbolic story has close analogies with some symbolical sayings in Philo, where the Logos is compared sometimes with the celestial drink of the soul, sometimes with the cup-bearer, or the ruler of the feast, who fills to the brim the holy vessels of the souls of the blessed with true joy, and who "gives wine instead of water, and intoxicates the soul with a divine elation."<sup>2</sup> When this image is combined with that taken from the Gospel, the allegory of the Cana miracle is so easily and completely explained that it is only by deliberately shutting the eyes that one can avoid seeing what is clearly there to be seen.

To this revelation of the fulness of grace in contrast with the emptiness of the Jewish forms is attached the further picture of the revelation of truth coming to judgment, in contrast with the worldly pomp of the Temple worship (ii. 13-22). The basis of this picture could be found in the Synoptic narrative of the cleansing of the Temple; and the Fourth Evangelist places it here at the beginning of Jesus' ministry without caring that he thus completely displaces the incident from its only possible historical position, since it was in reality, as appears with special clearness in the earliest Gospel, the decisive act which gave the immediate impulse to the decision of the priests to get Jesus put to death. And if it is proposed to accept two cleansings of the Temple, one at the beginning and the other at the end of Jesus'

<sup>1</sup> "Dass alles Vergängliche nur ein Gleichnis sei," an allusion to the words of the *Chorus mysticus* at the end of *Faust* :

"Alles Vergängliche

Ist nur ein Gleichnis."—TRANSLATOR.

<sup>2</sup> *Leg. alleg.*, iii. 26; *De Somn.*, ii. 37.

ministry, that is to combine the Johannine and the Synoptic representations of events in a way that does violence to both. For neither is there in the Johannine representation of the last days at Jerusalem room for the introduction of a second cleansing of the Temple, nor, on the other hand, is it possible to discover in the Synoptic representation any hint that this action was merely the repetition of a similar incident in the past. It only remains, therefore, to admit that the two accounts of the incident are mutually exclusive. But that it is the Synoptic account which has the better claim to historical correctness is obvious to anyone who is accustomed to think of history as a connected chain of causes and effects. But to admit that is at once to pronounce judgment upon the historical value of a Gospel the author of which allows himself to take such daring liberties with the earlier tradition. A contributory motive for his doing so, besides those mentioned above, may have been the Lucan story of the visit of the boy Jesus to the Temple (Luke ii. 41-52), which he did not like to leave out altogether, but, on the other hand, could not take over as it stood, because there Jesus appears as a learner sitting at the feet of the Jewish rabbis, a relation of dependence which was now not appropriate for the anti-Jewish Logos-Christ. He therefore retained from Luke the early visit to the Temple, but gave to it for its aim and purpose the later cleansing of the Temple.<sup>1</sup> The saying about breaking down and building up the Temple (ii. 19) is not found in this form in any of our Synoptic Gospels; probably the Fourth Evangelist took it from the Gospel of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jakobsen, *Untersuchungen über das Johannesevangelium*, p. 55.



Hebrews, where also he may have found the mistaken interpretation of it as a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The original sense of the saying is clear only in Mark's version of it; but as the Jewish-Christian Early Church would not hear of this interpretation, it explained it either as a "false witness," or as a prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus—in both cases quite arbitrarily. It is possible, however, that the Fourth Evangelist, accepting the interpretation which he found given in his Jewish-Christian source, combined with it a second, allegorical, sense, understanding by the "temple of his body" the mystical body of Christ, according to the Pauline use of the term, that is, the Christian Church; and in that case rightly grasped the original meaning of the saying.

The rejection of the Jewish Temple-worship implied in the cleansing of the Temple is followed in iii. 1–21 by a defining of relations with the Jewish theology, represented by Nicodemus, "the teacher of Israel," whose Synoptic prototypes are the scribe who asked about the greatest commandment (Mark xii. 28) and the lawyer who asked about the way of eternal life (Luke x. 25). The discourse of Jesus takes for its starting-point the saying belonging to the earlier tradition,<sup>1</sup> about the new birth as a condition of partaking in the Kingdom of God. But the evangelist gave to this saying about being born again the peculiar turn "born from above" (*ἄνωθεν*), which

<sup>1</sup> It is found in Justin Martyr (*Apol.*, I. lxi.) and the Pseudo-Clement, in the form, connected with Matt. xviii. 3, *ἐὰν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν*. Probably the common source was the Gospel of the Hebrews, which is also used elsewhere by both John and Justin.

he afterwards explains as being born of water and Spirit, in contradistinction to the natural birth from the flesh. He therefore describes Christian baptism as a new birth, through which a spiritual life derived from above is generated, instead of the life of the flesh which is derived from the earth. Because of this heavenly origin, the spiritual life of the Christian has about it something mysterious, inexplicable, like the blowing of the wind, the origin of which we do not know. Only the Son of Man who came down from heaven and ascended to heaven, and has His home in heaven, can make known that which is heavenly. He who believes on Him, has eternal life. The very purpose for which God's love has sent Him into the world is to save the world, not to judge it. The believer is not judged, the unbeliever is judged already; by his hatred of the saving light he gives proof that his character and action belong to the darkness.

That this discourse, the conversational form of which falls away entirely towards the close, is not derived from Jesus Himself, need scarcely be argued. The historical Jesus never spoke of having come down from heaven, and certainly not of His having ascended to heaven: by putting into the mouth of the earthly Jesus this saying, which can only refer to His Ascension, the Evangelist shows how magnificently careless he is about historical anachronisms. What he here represents as taught by Jesus, and in a later passage by John the Baptist, is the Hellenistic theology, which turned on the opposition of the higher and lower worlds and their reconciliation through Christ. The basis of these thoughts is to be found partly in the Pauline theology, especially

in the classical passage in 1 Cor. ii. about the Spirit from God and the unspirituality of the natural man, and partly in the Alexandrian philosophy of religion. "Who ever gained knowledge of thy counsel, unless . . . thou sentest him thy holy spirit from on high?" says the author of the Book of Wisdom in ix. 17; and in Philo<sup>1</sup> we find, "Can one who strives after the things of sense inherit things divine? Of them he only is counted worthy who is inspired from above (*καταπνευσθεὶς ἄνωθεν*), the most pure spirit, who has received a portion of the Divine and heavenly. Upwards and downwards (*ἄνω καὶ κάτω*) through the whole soul extend the Logos-powers (*λόγοι*) of God; when they ascend, drawing the soul up with them and freeing it from all that is mortal; when they descend, not casting it down—for neither God nor the Divine Logos is the cause of punishment—but condescending, out of love and mercy, to our race, for the sake of helping and allying themselves with it, in order to impart to the soul which is still being drawn down the stream of corporeity salvation and life." This latter passage especially, in which Philo interprets with reference to the Logos the ascending and descending of the angels upon the heavenly ladder in Jacob's dream (*cf.* John i. 51) has a remarkable affinity with John iii. 13 ff. In both cases there is an ascending and descending of the Logos, in both a denial of the purpose of judgment in God and the Logos (Christ), and an emphasising of love to mankind as the motive, and salvation and vivification of souls as the result, of the descent of the Divine helper. It is true that with all this there remains one essential distinction

<sup>1</sup> *Quis rer. div. hær.*, xiii. 38 (M. 482, 498); *De Somn.*, I. xxiii. (M. 643).

between the philosopher and the Evangelist: the former speaks of the universal activity of the Divine Logos in such human souls as are directed towards Divine things; the latter, of the special saving work of the Son of God, Jesus, for the benefit of Christian believers; but this entirely natural distinction cannot annul the essential similarity of the fundamental thought.

In the passage which follows this (iii. 22-36) the Evangelist once more introduces John the Baptist, in order that he may bear solemn testimony to the unique greatness of Christ. He, since He comes from above, is above all, for whereas any earthly man, therefore even John himself, can only speak of what comes within his earthly and limited range of vision, He who has been sent by God, the Christ who comes from above, speaks the words of God. For His testimony is derived from what He has seen and heard in heaven, with the Father, and from that full possession of the Spirit which belongs only to the Son, whom the Father loves, and into whose hand He has committed the whole execution of the Divine plan of salvation. Therefore, on faith or unbelief in Him depend life and death.

This testimony of John is proved by the similarity of the Christological ideas to those of the foregoing discourse of Christ to be in like manner a free composition of the Evangelist,<sup>1</sup> who causes to be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Réville, *Le quatrième Évangile*, p. 144. This section is certainly one of the most peculiar in the Fourth Gospel, and one of those in which the Evangelist has most freely displayed his astonishing indifference towards objective historical reality. John the Baptist speaks more than ever the language of the Evangelist, contrary to all that we know of him and to all probability. He

proclaimed by the mouth of John himself (verses 28-30) the Divine destiny of Christianity to be victorious over all earlier forms of religion, and in particular over the Johannine School at Ephesus, which was still in rivalry with the Church of Christ. The statement about John's baptizing at Aenon, near Salem,<sup>1</sup> is intended to give to the solemn farewell discourse of the Baptist a historical background, which, however, bears many traces of being unhistorical. The statement that Jesus Himself baptized contemporaneously with John the Baptist (iii. 22) is contrary to all other tradition, and is therefore subsequently withdrawn by the Evangelist himself (iv. 2), and limited to the disciples of Jesus—who, again, cannot have baptized during the lifetime of Jesus, since it was only after His resurrection that He gave them the command to baptize. Obviously, therefore, it is the later co-existence and rivalry of the two baptizing com-

continues to baptize, although he has already announced the arrival of the incarnate Logos in the person of Jesus and the substitution of the baptism of the Spirit for the baptism with water. The indignation of his disciples on hearing that Jesus was also baptizing implies that they as yet know nothing of the true nature of Jesus, though the Baptist has himself proclaimed it. And, moreover, Jesus Himself baptizes those who become His disciples with water, although, according to the Divine revelation, He had been sent to baptize with the Spirit. Some lines further on, no doubt, the Evangelist recognises this difficulty, and therefore explains that this baptism was not performed by Jesus Himself. Let who can, find his way out of this thicket of contradictions!

<sup>1</sup> These place-names cannot be geographically verified, and are therefore probably to be understood allegorically; Aenon (water springs) is related to Salem (salvation), as John's baptism with water to Christ's baptism with the Spirit.

munities which is here transferred to their authors and founders, quite in accordance with the Evangelist's general method of transferring to the life of Jesus the practices and beliefs of the Church of his own day, or rather of describing these under this kind of transparent symbolism. In the same way is to be explained the striking contradiction between verse 26, "Behold, this man (Christ) is baptizing and all are coming to him," and verse 32, "No man receiveth his testimony." In the former saying the Evangelist declares his conviction of the victorious superiority of Christianity as opposed to the Johannine School; in the latter he gives expression to his pessimistic view of the unreceptivity of the world as a whole for the truth of Christianity. That, however, this unreceptivity is not so great in the heathen world as in the Jewish, he immediately proceeds to show by the description of the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman and its consequences (chapter iv.). That the Samaritan woman can be nothing else than a type of the Samaritan religion, with its mixture of heathenism and Judaism, is clearly evident from iv. 18: "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." The key to the interpretation of this allegory lies in fact, as Hengstenberg long ago saw, in the statement in 2 Kings xvii. 24-41, that the population of Samaria was composed of five different peoples, each of which, alongside of the common worship of Jahwe, worshipped a separate heathen divinity in the local cults of the "high places of the land." And with this agrees the statement of Josephus (*Ant.*, IX. xiv. 3) that five peoples had each brought their own divinities into Samaria. This is obviously

what is alluded to in iv. 18: the five previous husbands are an allegory of the heathen cults which had formerly been dominant in Samaria; the present husband, who "is not a husband," is an allegory for the then prevailing spurious and illegitimate Jewish cultus, which in the eyes of the Jews was little better than the former heathenism of the Samaritans. It is only when taken thus, as an allegorical reference to the religious circumstances of Samaria, that the words acquire an intelligible sense and fit satisfactorily into the context; whereas if they are taken to be a literal reference to the domestic circumstance of a particular woman, as the defenders of the historicity of the conversation feel bound to insist on making them, no sense or connection can be wrung from them even by the most desperate exegetical contortions.<sup>1</sup> Luke had already made the Samaritans the representatives of heathenism, and the Fourth Evangelist, following in his footsteps, makes the Samaritan woman represent in the first place the half-heathen Samaritan religion, and then, further,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Réville, *ut sup.*, p. 149: "When taken literally this incident is as absurd as the marriage at Cana. Jesus did not speak in riddles or in philosophical language to the simple women to whom He revealed the love of the Heavenly Father and the Kingdom of God. This dialogue is simply lacking in all connection, if it is supposed to be the record of an actual conversation. It only becomes intelligible when its symbolical significance is recognised. No one denies that the water of which Jesus spoke was only a symbol; why should we find it more difficult to admit that the Samaritan woman and her five husbands are equally allegorical? To suppose that Jesus knew, immediately He saw this unknown woman, that she had been married five times, is to ascribe to Him pure magic. But if, on the other hand, the woman who draws water from Jacob's well is a personification of the Samaritan people, everything is explained in the simplest possible fashion."

heathenism in general. The woman's question, whether the Samaritan worship on Mount Gerizim, or that of the Jews in Jerusalem, was the right one, really, therefore, includes within it the question at issue between heathen and Jews as to the superiority of their respective religions. The solution of this question is then given by the Evangelist through the lips of Christ, in the sense that the superiority of the Jewish religion is recognised, inasmuch as it possesses the knowledge of God which heathenism lacks, and therefore also salvation can come from it, but both alike, Judaism and heathenism, are declared to be obsolete. In place of their locally and temporally limited worship there was now to come, in fact there had now come, the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth; just as in an earlier passage Christianity, as grace and truth, is contrasted with the Jewish Law, so here it is boldly described as the religion of truth, on a higher plane altogether than the pre-Christian stages of religion, on the ground that it is the religion which has its being in the inwardness of the spirit, and therefore, as the sole spiritual religion, alone corresponds to the nature of God.

This spiritualisation of the idea of God, and liberation of it from national limitations and sensuous forms of worship, this universalisation of it to be the common possession of mankind, this deepening of religion into a purely ethical relation of spirit to spirit—this was the fruit of Hellenism, as ripened and harvested by Christianity. How much Christianity owes to Hellenism it is possible to measure when we consider how wide is the distance which separates the conception of the Christian religion



which is expressed in John iv. 24 from the belief of the primitive Church in the introduction of a new order of earthly conditions among the Jewish people through the return of the Messiah Jesus; or even from the Pauline idea of redemption from the Law through Christ's propitiatory death. But anyone who considers this will not be able to shut his mind to the conviction that Christianity is not wholly a growth of Palestinian soil, but that, as the Evangelist finely says in iv. 35, the lands<sup>1</sup> were everywhere already white unto harvest, and only waiting for the reapers, who should bring in as a ripe harvest the crops which it had needed the labour of centuries to produce. This magnificent success of the preaching of Christianity among the heathen<sup>2</sup> the Evangelist suggests by the example of the convinced faith of the Samaritans, founded only on the preaching of the word, in the "Saviour of the world" (not merely of Israel), verses 41 ff.

In Galilee, also, Jesus met with a friendly reception (verse 45). But when the Evangelist makes Jesus go down from Judæa to Galilee because a prophet has no honour in his own country (iv. 3, 44), he must

<sup>1</sup> The original has τὰς χώρας, and the author doubtless renders "Länder" with intention. (Luther has "das Feld," and Weizsäcker "die Felder.")—TRANSLATOR.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Réville, *ut sup.* p. 153. The author is so careless about historical accuracy that he makes Jesus speak in the past tense—"I have sent you," "you have laboured" (verse 38). Remember that the Apostles had as yet done no missionary work, and that we are only at the beginning of Jesus' own ministry. There is no passage that shows better how the author puts his own reflections and the language of his own time into the mouth of Jesus. What Jesus here says has reference to the missionaries who succeeded Paul and the Twelve.

clearly have meant by the home of Jesus, not Galilee but Judæa; and, as a matter of fact, in his narrative the doings and sayings of Jesus in Galilee seem to form mere episodes in relation to the greatly predominating extent of the Judæan ministry. That in this the historical facts are entirely abandoned, and that they are sacrificed to a dogmatic postulate of the Evangelist, is immediately obvious.

The narrative which follows, the healing of a court official's son at Capernaum, is a free variation of the Synoptic narrative of the centurion's servant at Capernaum (Luke vii. 1 ff. = Matt. viii. 5 ff.). The moral is also essentially the same in the Johannine as in the Synoptic narrative; the Gentile's belief in the word is contrasted with the Jewish demand for miracles. In order to mark this contrast, John makes Jesus first censure the Jewish belief which needed miracles to rest on (verse 48), and in order to give occasion for this censure, he makes the suppliant not at first declare his complete faith in the power of Jesus' word to work at a distance; this faith only arises when he hears the word of promise (verse 50), in accordance with the Pauline saying, "Faith comes by hearing" (Rom. x. 17).

In chapter v. the Evangelist sets alongside of the complete faith of the Samaritans and the half faith of the Galilæans the complete unbelief of the people of Judæa, for whom Christ's word of life becomes a word of judgment. The occasion arises out of the healing at the pool of Bethesda of the man who had been infirm for thirty-eight years, whose prototypes are the paralytic of Mark ii. 1-11 and the lame man healed by Peter (Acts iii. 1-10). But John, by the addition of certain allegorical traits, has made the literal sick

man of these narratives into a symbol of the sick nation. That is pointed to by the thirty-eight years' sickness, recalling the thirty-eight years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness, in which Jewish theology had already found an allegory of the thirty-eight centuries during which humanity was to wait for the coming of the Messiah. The scene of the incident is also to be understood allegorically. Bethesda, with its five porches, is the "house of grace" which the sick Jewish people had hitherto sought in its legal religion (the five Books of the Law, and the five parts of the Temple), but had hitherto never found, until in the word of the Saviour the true spring of grace was opened. But this very spring of grace was so passionately rejected by the majority of the nation, with its fanatical attachment to the Law, that they even sought to kill the Saviour, who could alone heal their sicknesses, because He did works of healing on the Sabbath (verse 16). This suggestion is also taken from the familiar Synoptic stories of Sabbath cures, which, there also, are generally followed by polemical discourses. But how different from these is the Johannine discourse which now follows! There the defence of Jesus moves among the simple truths of the moral consciousness, here among theological and Christological reflections. At the very beginning of the discourse he rejects the Jewish view that the Sabbath rest had been commanded because God rested on the seventh day, in favour of the Philonian view that God had never ceased to create, but always continued working;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With v. 17 cf. Philo, *Leg. alleg.*, i. 3: Παύεται οὐδέποτε ποιῶν ὁ θεὸς, ἀλλ' ὡσπερ ἴδιον τὸ καίειν πυρὸς καὶ χιόνος τὸ ψύχειν, οὕτω καὶ θεοῦ τὸ ποιεῖν, καὶ πολὺ γὰρ μᾶλλον, ὅσῳ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν ἀρχὴ τοῦ δρᾶν

and in this the Son of God was following His example. The anger of the Jews at Christ's making himself equal with God gives occasion for a more detailed explanation of His relation to the Father, as consisting of perfect fellowship and identity of action between Father and Son, accompanied by complete dependence on the part of the Son. This dependence is here and elsewhere very decidedly emphasised; it is in this way that the Hellenistic theologian succeeds in uniting his monotheistic belief, which remains a fixed and immovable conviction, with his exalted view of Christ's Divine greatness. The content of the Divine action in which the Son imitates the Father is twofold. On the one hand it is described as life-giving, and that in two senses: as the awakening of the higher religious life which the believer as such already possesses, whereby he is exalted above judgment and death, and as the raising up of the (literal) dead at the future general resurrection; on the other, as exercised in judgment, the authority for which has been committed to the Son of Man, who judges justly, in accordance with what He hears from God, doing the will of Him who sent Him. This latter statement is in apparent contradiction with the earlier one that God sent His Son into the world not to judge it but to save it (iii. 17), but the contradiction is removed by what follows in that passage. The direct purpose of Christ's mission is to save, but this purpose is not fulfilled in all men, because not all believe in the

*ἐστίν* ("God never ceases working; for just as it is the property of fire to burn and of snow to cool, so it is proper to God to work; nay, and much more so, seeing that He is to all other things the source and principle of action").

Saviour. Those who do not believe are judged already, by the very fact that they reject the sole means of salvation. And they do this because in their hearts they love darkness rather than light (iii. 19). According to this the "judgment" does not directly consist in an act of Christ, but in the inevitable consequences of His work as Saviour, namely, that some allow themselves to be saved by it while others exclude themselves from this salvation. The judgment is therefore the *κρίσις*, or separation between the children of light and the children of darkness—a thoroughly Gnostic view, which played a part of special prominence in the Basilidean system. But this view, which is clearly expressed in iii. 17–21, has been combined by the Evangelist in v. 27 ff. with the traditional expectation of a future judgment following on the resurrection—in accordance with his usual method of mediating between Gnostic ideas and the faith of the Church. The conclusion of the discourse takes the form of an appeal to the twofold witness which the Father bears to the Son, by the works which He has given to the Son to fulfil, and by the holy Scriptures, which testify of Christ; wherefore Jewish unbelief has an accuser in Moses himself.

The theme of Christ as the mediator of life is continued in chapter vi., and is here connected with the story of the feeding of the multitude, in which the Marcan account is very closely followed. In Mark this miracle has attached to it the miracle of Jesus' walking on the water; and in this also the Fourth Evangelist follows him, and apparently enhances the miracle still further by suggesting a miraculous expediting of the voyage (verse 21). But though the miracle-story has its own importance

for him, as is evident from the expressly added affirmation of the miracle which we find here and elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> he attaches still greater importance to the idea which is therein symbolised, and which he now goes on to make Christ develop in a lengthy discourse. Christ Himself is the true miraculous bread from heaven.<sup>2</sup> He gives (in the Lord's Supper) his flesh and blood as the true food of life, by feeding on which the believer comes into the closest union with Christ, and becomes partaker of His eternal life. That there is here a reference to the Lord's Supper can as little be doubted as in the case of the reference to baptism in iii. 6. It is not possible to avoid this reference by taking the words about eating and drinking the flesh and blood of the Son of Man (verse 53 ff.) as a purely symbolical periphrasis for believing in the Person of Jesus. The discourse no doubt takes for its starting-point the thought that Christ, who has come down from heaven, is the "bread of God, bread of life, living bread, which gives life to the world," *i.e.* that the Person of Christ is the embodiment of the Divine life and the means of communicating it to those who believe on Him. But in verse 51 the discourse goes a long way beyond this general thought, in describing the sole means for the mystical appropriation of life: "And the bread which I will give for the life of the world [as a mystical provision or food of the soul] is my flesh. . . . Verily I say unto you, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you. Whoso

<sup>1</sup> With vi. 14 and 26 *cf.* ii. 11, iii. 2, iv. 54, ix. 16, etc.—TRANSLATOR.

<sup>2</sup> By Philo also (*Quis rer. div. hær.*, xv., and *Leg. alleg.*, iii. 59) the manna is allegorically interpreted as referring to the Divine Logos, who is called the heavenly and imperishable food of the soul.

eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink [that is, a provision for the maintenance of essential, permanent, not merely earthly and perishable life]. As the living Father hath sent me and I live because of the Father, so also he that eateth me shall live because of me" (verses 51-58). It is impossible to understand this intensely realistic manner of speech as a mere symbol for the spiritual appropriation of Christ by faith; it only becomes intelligible when taken as a description of the mystical eating and drinking at the Supper, which here, as in Ignatius, is conceived of as a "medicine of immortality," a miraculous food which produces and guarantees the life of the hereafter. That this way of conceiving it presents a certain contrast to the general spirituality of the Johannine theology is of course not to be denied; but to infer from that that the whole passage (verses 51-59) is a later interpolation would be an over-hasty conclusion. We must not forget that our Evangelist was not merely a Hellenistic, but also a Church theologian, who did not wish to discredit by his Gnosis the faith and worship of the Church, as the heretics did, but rather desired to use it to defend and establish these. His purpose in giving prominence to the universally-held doctrine that Christ's Person was the bread of life which was to be appropriated by faith, was to conclude thence to the necessity and reality of the mystical partaking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, that is, of the exalted Christ. Whether this conclusion follows for our methods of thought is not here the question; it is certain that it is quite in accordance with the spirit

and thought of his own time, for which there was, it may fairly be said, no religion without "mysteries," that is to say, without *media*, at once sensuous and super-sensuous, for the appropriating of salvation and the guaranteeing of life. The intentionally forced emphasis upon the reality of the partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ has, moreover, an unmistakably polemical reference to Gnostic Docetism, which denied the reality of the body of Christ altogether, and consequently also at the Supper. This extreme spiritualism naturally called forth a reaction on the part of Church teachers in the form of an extreme realism, which was not capable of being completely reconciled with a Hellenistic theology. The inconsistency in this and similar cases (*cf.* p. 37 *sup.*) is therefore thoroughly characteristic of the Hellenistic yet anti-Gnostic standpoint of the author.<sup>1</sup> The further objection that Jesus could not in any case have spoken at this time to the Jews at Capernaum about the Lord's Supper, which was not instituted until the last night before His death, is, of course, quite sound as regards the facts. But it does not therefore prove anything as to the meaning of the Johannine discourse, for we have repeatedly seen, and shall repeatedly see as we go on, how little the Evangelist is accustomed to trouble himself about the historical possibility of the circumstances in which he represents these discourses as being delivered. There is, moreover, a practical appropriateness in connecting the discourse on the Supper with the feeding of the multitude, since this narrative doubtless had its origin in the love-feast of the primitive community, with which the Supper was at first united.

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* Holtzmann, *Kommentar*, p. 110 f.; Réville, *ut sup.*, p. 182 f.



As the Supper was the life-giving "mystery" only for the community of faithful disciples, but to those without was unintelligible, and even an offence—it was, as is well known, on the celebration of the Christian mysteries that the worst calumnies of opponents fastened themselves. So, according to John, the offence given to the Jews by this discourse was the cause of the falling off of many half-disciples, while in the case of the loyal disciples it was the occasion for a confession of faith in the Holy One of God (the Messiah), who had "the words of eternal life." This is the Johannine parallel to the confession of Peter in the Synoptists, forming the climax and conclusion of the Galilæan period of the Gospel history.

After Peter's confession the Synoptists make Jesus turn His gaze towards Jerusalem, and, before long, enter upon the journey thither; and the Fourth Evangelist follows them in so far that from chapter vii. onwards he transfers the scene of the whole of the remainder of the story to Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. He introduces the journey thither by the curious remark that Jesus after that walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Judæa because the Jews were seeking to kill Him, and therefore, too, He did not immediately respond to the challenge of His unbelieving brethren to go up to Jerusalem, but only after their departure went up secretly to the Feast. What suggested to the Evangelist this peculiar conception of a game of hide-and-seek, first the refusal to go up, and then the going after all, but secretly, may perhaps be guessed, if we look at the materials that he had before him in the Synoptists. In Mark ix. 30 we are told that Jesus passed through Galilee

and wished to remain unrecognised, because, that is, He had fixed His eyes on Jerusalem as His goal, as we gather from Luke ix. 51. John has there combined these indications as follows. From Mark's "passing through Galilee" he makes a "walking in Galilee"; from Luke's note of time ("when the days of his exaltation were being fulfilled, he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem," ix. 51) he takes, on the one hand, the reason of His refusal to make the journey immediately, "My time is not yet come" (verse 6), and, on the other hand, also the fact of the journey; and in order to reconcile the two he has recourse to Mark's statement that Jesus had desired to remain unrecognised, and out of that he makes the going up in secret (verse 10).

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### CHAPTER II

#### THE CONTROVERSIES AT JERUSALEM

THE polemical discourses which now follow and compose the second part of the Gospel (chapters vii.–xii.) may be regarded as the Johannine parallel to the polemical discourses at Jerusalem which the Synop-  
tists report, though, in truth, they differ widely enough from these both in form and content. Nevertheless, the Evangelist unmistakably has here before his eyes the situation pictured by the Synop-  
tists in the first days of the Passover week at Jerusalem. According to Luke xx. 1, in consequence of Jesus' teaching, the question was put to Him by the hierarchy, by what authority He was doing this, or who had given Him this authority? Similarly, in John vii. 15, the Jews ask in astonishment how Jesus, without having been trained as a Rabbi, knows the Scriptures; and He answers, "My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me." We are further told in Luke several times that the chief priests sought to destroy Jesus, or to gain possession of His person (xix. 47 f.; xx. 19), but did not dare to carry out their wishes for fear of the people, who were on His side. Similarly, John says several times (vii. 19, 25, 32, 44 f.)

that the Jews sought to kill Jesus, and that the chief priests sent their servants to arrest Him, but no one dared to lay hands on Him because the impression made by His words was overpowering. That this statement of John is derived from his Synoptic model is clearly evident, because in the latter there is a natural motive for the murderous designs of the hierarchy, whereas in the Johannine narrative nothing has yet been mentioned which would constitute a sufficient reason for it. The cleansing of the Temple, owing to its removal to the beginning of Jesus' ministry, has lost its historical significance in regard to the course of events, and the healing on the Sabbath, to which in vii. 23 the murderous enmity of the Jews is referred back, is quite insufficient to explain it, the more so as even this healing belongs, according to John v. 1 ff., to an earlier visit of Jesus to Jerusalem.

One of the discourses of Jesus recorded in Luke xx. = Mark xii. refers to a question regarding the Davidic sonship of the Messiah. To this John alludes by making some of the Jews, in answer to the assertion of others that Jesus is the Messiah, raise the objection that the Messiah must come of David's seed, and from David's town of Bethlehem, and that therefore this Galilæan could not be the Messiah (verse 41 f.). Immediately before this discourse about the Son of David, Mark tells of "one of the Scribes" who asked Jesus about the chief commandment, and joyfully assented to His answer; and consequently received from Jesus the commendation that he was not far from the Kingdom of God (xii. 28-34). Similarly, John, in vii. 50, makes "one of them" (the chief priests and Pharisees) come

forward as the advocate of Jesus against the men of his own order, viz. Nicodemus, whom he had previously introduced in chapter iii. as a type of the few teachers in Israel who were friendly towards Christ. In the same connection, finally, the Synoptists relate that the chief priests sought to lay a trap for Jesus in the artful question about the justice of the tribute-money, but that His answer reduced them to a shamed silence. To this also we find a parallel in the Fourth Gospel in the form of another story which the Evangelist, as we may conclude from a statement of Eusebius, took from the Gospel of the Hebrews—the section about the woman taken in adultery (viii. 3–11). That the point of this story is the same as in the question about the tribute-money, namely, the artful attempt to bring Jesus into conflict either with the stern legality of the popular conscience, which demanded the death penalty as the punishment of adultery, or with the Roman government, which had deprived the hierarchy of criminal jurisdiction, is shown with sufficient clearness in viii. 6 (*cf.* Luke xx. 20). And the result, too, in both cases is exactly the same. As in Luke xx. 26 the questioners are silenced by the unexpected answer of Jesus, so in John viii. 9 the accusers, on hearing His answer, withdraw in silent confusion. Besides this main point of the story, another point of subordinate importance is the forgiving gentleness of Jesus towards the sinner, which has, moreover, its nearest analogue in the well-known Lucan story of the penitent woman (vii. 36–50). When in addition to this inner relationship of the story with the corresponding sections in the Synoptic Gospels we note that the introductory remark also in viii. 1 f.

shows an almost verbal agreement with the situation described in Luke xxi. 37 f., we cannot fail to recognise that internal probability is in favour of the genuineness of this *pericope* in John's Gospel, while the absence of it in ancient MSS. is easily to be explained, as Augustine<sup>1</sup> conjectured long ago, from the fact that the leniency of Jesus towards this grave transgression was thought in the Church to be dangerous.

If in these first sections of his second part John unmistakably makes use of several passages from the Synoptists, in the remainder of the discourses he goes his own way. These discourses revolve about the fundamental thoughts which have already been expressed in the prologue: Christ, as coming from above, the Son of God, is the source of Light and Life, whose work results in the salvation of some and the judgment of others. Perhaps in connection with the customs of the Feast of Tabernacles, to which occasion this discourse is referred, Jesus had already, in vii. 37, offered Himself as the source of the living water for the quenching of all thirst, that is to say, as the source of the Spirit which bestows immortal life. And in viii. 12 He describes Himself as the light of the world, to follow whom was to have the light of life. Isaiah had prophesied of a great light which should shine in the darkness, by which the nations should walk (lx. 1 f.), and the Evangelists Luke and Matthew had hailed the rising of this light in their poetic stories of the nativity; and Jesus had spoken of His disciples as the light of the world, and promised them that what they had spoken in the darkness (in obscurity) should be heard in the light

<sup>1</sup> *De Conjug. Adult.*, II. vii. 6.—TRANSLATOR.

(Luke xii. 3). These thoughts the Fourth Evangelist has combined in Christ's self-designation "the Light of the world." He is so, because He has come from above and goes thither again; and in evidence of this He can appeal, not only to His own testimony, but to that of His Father, who never leaves Him alone, because He always does that which is pleasing in His sight, and makes known to the world that which He hears from Him. Therefore His word is the Truth, which makes free those who in faith receive it. But the Jews are not capable of understanding His word because they are not of God, but, in spite of their boasted descent from Abraham, are rather the children of the devil, whose nature and work is the opposite of truth, namely, a lie. On this the Jews accuse Him of being a Samaritan (heretic) and having a devil—the Johannine parallel to the Synoptic charge of being in alliance with Beelzebub. In answer to this, Jesus declares that He does not seek His own honour but His Father's, and conversely it is the Father who seeks Christ's honour, and avenges it. He who keeps His word will not see death to all eternity. Thereupon renewed charges of being possessed, and an appeal to Abraham and the prophets, who are surely dead. Then follows the solemn declaration, "Before Abraham came into being, I am." Whereas in the Synoptists the polemic called forth by the Beelzebub charge moves within the domain of ethical experience, and closes with a warning against impious blasphemy against the Holy One, its Johannine counterpart soars into the heights of transcendental Christological speculation. On which side historical truth lies is a question which answers itself.

In chapter ix. the theme "Christ the light of the world" is continued, but this further discourse is introduced by the narrative of the healing of a man born blind. The basis of it is to be sought in Mark's narrative of the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (viii. 22 ff.), and that in the Acts, of Peter's healing of the lame man at the gate of the Temple (iii. 1-iv. 22). As in the latter case the healing act is officially confirmed by the Jewish authorities and the impression made by the widely known fact upon the people prevents the hierarchy from taking action against the Apostles, so John makes the healing of the man born blind to be circumstantially confirmed by the Pharisees, and uses this opportunity to set the simple faith of the healed man of the people in effective contrast with the obstinate unbelief of the leaders of the people. By this is at once made manifest the general truth in which the point of the story lies, viz. that the appearance of the Divine light in the incarnate Logos-Christ exercises a twofold effect. Some it enlightens so that they are cured of their natural blindness and receive sight, while others who in their self-imagined wisdom profess to see, are delivered over to the judgment of permanent blindness (ix. 39 ff.). The thought just expressed—of the helpless people which has in its rulers bad shepherds, case-hardened in their conceit and selfishness—is developed by the Evangelist in chapter x. in a many-sided allegory. The elements of this are partly supplied by Old Testament imagery, partly by the Synoptic parables, on the one hand of the wicked husbandman, and on the other of the shepherd who goes after his lost sheep and brings it back. Out of these materials the Fourth Evangelist has made the



picture of Christ as the Good Shepherd, whose voice the sheep know and whom they follow, and who for their deliverance lays down his own life, whereas the hirelings think only of themselves and care nothing for the danger of the sheep—as Ezekiel had long ago described the rulers of the people: “My shepherds seek not after my sheep, but feed themselves” (xxxiv. 8). With this picture, however, the Evangelist combines the further one of the true door of the sheepfold, through which only the true shepherd has access, whereas thieves and robbers climb in by some illegitimate way. Here he doubtless had before his mind the words of Ps. cxviii. 19 f., “Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may go in and praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, by which the righteous shall enter.” Jesus had also spoken in the Synoptic Gospels of the narrow gate which leads to life; and as He Himself went before His disciples on this way, it was not a very long step to compare Him with the true gate through which the sheep go out and in and find pasture and safety (verse 9). But the Good Shepherd’s flock is not confined to Israel; He has other sheep which are not of this fold (of the Israelitish nation); these also He must bring in, that out of Jews and Gentiles may be made one flock, under one shepherd (verse 16). The bringing of the scattered sheep out of the heathen world to the one Shepherd who should feed them had already been spoken of by Ezekiel (xxxiv. 12, 13), though, of course, only with reference to the Jews as scattered in the Exile, but the Christian Hellenist applied the saying to the Gentile-Christians who were to be gathered under the leadership of Christ as a new people of God. Of all these His destined sheep, the

Good Shepherd Christ will lose none, for they are given to Him by the Father, from whose hand no man can snatch them, and with whom He Himself is one, in nature, will, and action. This saying (verse 30) gives the Jews occasion once more, as in chapter vii., to accuse Him of blasphemy; and in answer, He points to the analogy of the passage of Scripture where the theocratic rulers are spoken of as gods and sons of the Most High (Ps. lxxxii. 6), and to His works, in which they ought to recognise the works of God (verses 24-39).

As the first half of the theme "Christ the light and the life of the world" is illustrated in chapter ix. by a miracle-story, so now this is done for the second part by the story of the raising of Lazarus in chapter xi. To interpret literally this story of the raising from the dead of a body which had lain in the grave four days and was already beginning to decay would be a mischievous error, offending no less against sound reason and taste than against the spirit of this Gospel. For more than in any other miracle-story of the New Testament there are clearly visible in this miracle, which out-goes them all, both the ideal motives and the Synoptic elements which have gone to the making of this free allegorical composition. As regards, in the first place, the domestic circle in which the scene of the story is laid, the three persons who compose it are taken from the Gospel of Luke, united by the Fourth Evangelist into one family, and transferred to Bethany. The beautiful story in Luke, of the two sisters Martha and Mary at whose house Jesus halted on His journey, is of course well known. They lived, it is true, according to Luke, not in Bethany, but in an unnamed village between Galilee

and Judæa; but, on the other hand, there lived in Bethany another woman-friend of Jesus who testified her believing love by the finely-conceived action of anointing Him with precious nard (Mark xiv. 3). This unnamed disciple at Bethany has been identified by John with Luke's Mary, and therefore the two sisters have been transferred from the unnamed village to the well-known Bethany near Jerusalem. In the characterisation of the sisters he has carefully preserved the traits given in the Lucan narrative. That the two sisters have a brother named Lazarus (= God hath helped) is unknown to Luke, but in the parable in xvi. 19 f., which is peculiar to his Gospel, he mentions a Lazarus who was sick, and died, and was buried, and whose return to his<sup>1</sup> brethren (as a messenger from the other world to convert them) is at least contemplated as the object of a pious aspiration and earnest petition, even though it does not come to fulfilment (xvi. 27 ff.). The request of the rich man is there refused by Abraham, who points out that his unbelieving brethren (the Jews), if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, would not believe even if a man were to rise from the dead. It is the result, or rather want of result, which it is there asserted would follow from the desired resurrection of Lazarus, were it to take place, that the Evangelist here designs to confirm by a startling fact. He therefore causes the resurrection of Lazarus, which is there only proposed, to be actually fulfilled, and he makes it the miraculous effect of the word of Christ, who thereby, even before His own resurrection and as an anticipatory type of it, shows

<sup>1</sup> So the author, by a slip. It is practically corrected in the next sentence.—TRANSLATOR.

Himself to be the Resurrection and the Life, and gives to those who believe in Him the source and guarantee of a life which shall be no more subject to death (verse 25 f.). But it is precisely when confronted with this greatest proof of Christ's power that the unbelief of the Jewish hierarchy displays itself—just as Father Abraham had foretold in the Lucan story—in all its impenetrable obduracy. “From that day forth they determined to put him to death” (verse 53). In this way, besides illustrating their unbelief, the miracle of the raising of Lazarus serves our Evangelist as the decisive factor in the circumstances leading to the death of Jesus. He supplies thereby a dramatic motive calculated to fill the gap left by his premature anticipation of the cleansing of the Temple, the really decisive point in the history of Jesus. But if this miracle of the raising of Lazarus was to serve this purpose, it must not happen in an obscure village, but in a place which was close to the scene of the further development of the drama; that is why it is transferred to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, to Bethany, where Jesus had friends whose house He was accustomed to visit, and where also He received at the hands of a woman-disciple the anointing which consecrated Him to His death. And as our Evangelist had, apart from this, identified this woman-disciple with the Mary of the Lucan narrative, it naturally followed that he should go on to make Lazarus the brother of the Lucan sisters, now transferred to Bethany; and thus, too, the friendly relation of Jesus towards this family supplied a psychological motive for His working this outstanding miracle in the case of Lazarus. Thus the whole narrative of John xi. can be completely

explained as an ingenious combination of the scattered fragments of mosaic lying here and there in Luke and Mark. Consider, on the other hand, how inconceivable—quite apart from all the internal difficulties—would be the mere fact that so outstanding a miracle of Christ, performed with the most complete publicity and exercising a decisive influence upon His fate, should have left not a single trace in the whole Synoptic tradition. When this is fairly considered, it must be admitted that the question regarding the historicity of the Johannine story of the raising of Lazarus presents itself in such a way that the arguments against are irresistible. And to admit that is of course inevitably to pronounce sentence on the historical value of the Johannine life of Jesus as a whole. In this connection another point of fatal significance occurs towards the close of chapter xi. John says of Caiaphas that he was “high priest that year,” which clearly implies that the high priest was changed every year. This was certainly not the case with the high priest at Jerusalem; how, then, can the Evangelist have arrived at this curious assumption? The solution of the enigma is simply the custom which obtained in Asia Minor of appointing every year a high priest for the new temple for the worship of the emperor, after whom the year was named in the whole province of Asia.<sup>1</sup> This custom of his own country has been mistakenly transferred by the Evangelist to the Jewish high priesthood, and he has thus of course given a striking proof of his ignorance of Palestinian conditions.

The anointing of Jesus at Bethany recounted in

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *Rom. Gesch.*, v. 318 (= *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, i. 345).

xii. 1-8 belongs to the earliest evangelical tradition, but the form of the Johannine narrative is clearly to be recognised as a combination of the two Synoptic stories of anointing in Mark xiv. and Luke vii. From Mark comes the place of the anointing, Bethany; from Luke vii. the manner of the anointing, viz. that, contrary to all usual custom, the woman anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair. This striking feature of the anointing has its natural explanation in the Lucan narrative, where the woman is a penitent sinner who first washes Jesus' feet with her tears and then dries them with her hair, and finally anoints them; for it is there a sign of humble penitence. But in the Johannine story the departure from the regular custom of anointing the head is quite without motive; and similarly the drying of the anointed feet with the hair (John) is as surprising as the drying of the tear-wetted feet with the hair (Luke) is intelligible. Thus the Johannine account proves to be, in its peculiar details, a not quite happy combination of the two Synoptic parallels. On the other hand, it may be left an open question whether the giving of the woman's name as "Mary" is merely to be explained from the fact that our Evangelist has transferred the Martha and Mary of the Lucan narrative to his story of Lazarus and to Bethany, or whether he was perhaps following in this an older tradition. The latter would be the case if the conjecture suggested by Mark's account is right (see vol. ii. p. 70, note), that this woman-disciple, who is so highly honoured in Mark's narrative and yet is not named, may have been his own mother, Mary.

After the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, that entry upon the path of suffering, John places an allegorical

scene which foreshadows His victorious entry into the heathen world.

Some Greeks desire to be brought into contact with Jesus, and this is effected through Philip, the precursor of the Pauline mission to the Gentiles (xii. 20 ff.). As to the result of the Greeks' request nothing further is said, because for the Evangelist the important thing was the very fact of the Gentiles inquiring after Christ; and in this Christ Himself sees a sign of His impending glorification. This, however, is to be the fruit of His death, which is compared with the dying and fruit-bearing of the grain of wheat (verse 23 f.). To this are attached some sayings about following Christ in self-denial and service, which are recorded by the Synoptists in connection with the first announcement of the Passion (verse 25 f.).

Then follows a scene peculiar to the Fourth Gospel, in which we may recognise a free re-casting and combination of the two Synoptic scenes, on the Mount of Transfiguration and in Gethsemane (verses 27 ff.). From the former is taken Jesus' agitation of soul and the petition—though here, it is true, put interrogatively as a bare possibility—for deliverance from this hour; from the latter is derived the voice from heaven which announces the glorification<sup>1</sup> of Jesus. That the Evangelist, not less than his Synoptic predecessors, thought here of a real voice from heaven, in articulate words, in which God attested that the coming sufferings of His Son would accomplish His glorification or exaltation to

<sup>1</sup> *Verklärung*, the usual German word for the Transfiguration, but not, like our word, a *vox propria*. The ambiguity has a certain literary value here.

heaven, is not to be explained away; the explanation of the voice as "thunder" is given only as the opinion of some of the people; he by no means adopts it. The opinion of others, that an angel had spoken to Christ, recalls the appearance of the angel in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 43). Finally, Jesus Himself declares that this voice was not given for His own sake, but for the sake of the people, and that now is being fulfilled the judgment of the world, in which the Prince of this world (the devil) will be cast out. Here the Evangelist seems to have had before his mind yet a third passage of Luke: in Luke x. 18 Jesus says, when the Seventy Disciples tell of the splendid success of their missionary journey, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like a lightning flash." The thought in both cases is the same; by the success of the mission to the Gentiles, which Luke typifies by the sending out of the Seventy Disciples, John by the request of the Greeks, the overthrow of Satan's lordship over the Gentile world is guaranteed; and in that consists for both Evangelists His earthly exaltation, which is parallel to His heavenly glorification (Luke x. 21 ff. = John xii. 28-32).

At the close of this second part, which is devoted to the controversies of Christ with the Jews, the Evangelist announces a final judgment on the obdurate unbelief of the Jews, clothed in the form of two quotations from Isaiah, one of which had already been employed for the same purpose by Paul, and the other in the Synoptists and Acts (verses 38-40). Then follows, in the form of a discourse of Jesus—for which, however, an audience is lacking, since, according to verse 36, Jesus had



already withdrawn Himself from the Jews—a summary recapitulation of the main thoughts of the previous discourses, a kind of epilogue to the public ministry of Christ, which here comes to a close. The first two parts of the Gospel (i. 19–vi. 71; vii. 1–xii. 50) contained the expansion of the two statements of the prologue, “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it,” and “he came to his own possessions, and his own people did not receive him” (i. 5 and 11); the third part, which now follows, is to be devoted to expanding the statement in the prologue (i. 12): “but those who received him, to them gave he the right to become sons of God, even to those who believe on his name.”

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION. THE SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

WITH chapter xiii. begins the third part of the Gospel, the fulfilment of Christ's saving love in His self-humiliation of service and suffering, and in His victorious exaltation. The story of the Passion is introduced, as in the Synoptic Gospels, by the farewell meal which Jesus takes with His disciples, and the discourses spoken at it, chapters xiii.—xvii. As his basis our Evangelist has used Luke xxii., in which, also, a longer discourse than in the other Synoptic Gospels is connected with the Lord's Supper. But in this respect John goes much further than Luke, and departs altogether from the Synoptic tradition, with the bold freedom which we have already had frequent occasion to notice. While according to the Synoptic tradition the meal was a celebration of the Paschal meal on the Passover eve, in John it is not this, but an ordinary meal on the day previous to that on which the Paschal meal was held, so that the day of Jesus' death falls on the day of the Paschal meal, and He therefore Himself appears as the anti-type of the Paschal lamb which, as

Paul says in i. Cor. v. 7, has been slain for us. That this doctrinal motive was the cause of the Fourth Evangelist's departing from the Synoptic account is hardly to be doubted. And while the Synoptic tradition connects the institution of the Lord's Supper of the New Covenant with this Passover meal of Jesus, the Fourth Evangelist entirely omits this, and fills in the gap with the story of the washing of the disciples' feet, which too clearly betrays itself as an allegory translated into action, having its basis in Luke xxii. 27, for us to be able to take it as historical. The reason for this departure from the earlier unanimous tradition can only be that our Evangelist desires completely to dissociate the Christian passover from the Jewish Paschal meal. Jesus' farewell meal must not therefore be a Paschal meal, and consequently the institution of the Lord's Supper on this occasion had to be suppressed. By way of compensation, he had used the earlier incident of the feeding of the multitude as a point of attachment for a discourse of Jesus about the Lord's Supper (chapter vi.).

The prediction of the treachery of Judas is composed by combining Mark xiv. 18-21 and Luke xxii. 3 in such a way that the words of Mark, "he that dippeth with me in the dish," which is only intended as a general indication that it is one of those at table with Him, receives a more explicit form: Jesus dips a morsel in the dish and gives it to Judas, and then, when he has taken the morsel, Satan enters into him. The Satanic possession by which Luke explains the treachery of Judas (xxii. 3) is thus attached by John, with greater dramatic effect, to the definite moment when Judas received the

morsel from the Saviour's hand, so that it becomes for him a means of judgment, a sacrament of Satan. In the prediction of Peter's denial the Fourth Evangelist follows Luke, in so far that, to save the honour of the chief Apostle, he makes Jesus indicate Peter's subsequent loyal following of him, parallel to what we find in Luke, "When thou turnest again, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32 = John xiii. 36).

As Luke before him had filled in the farewell hour with sayings of Jesus, in which He impressed upon the disciples His last exhortations, promises, and consolations, so now John also connects with this last meal a series of parting discourses of Jesus which have as their subject consolation for the disciples in view of His departure to the Father, exhortation to show their love towards Him by keeping His commandments, and the promise of His abiding presence and intimate union with them through the Spirit which He would send them from the Father (chapters xiv.—xvii.). The incisive severity of the earlier anti-Jewish polemics entirely disappears in the discourses to the disciples, giving place to a calm gentleness and affectionate intimacy which, in combination with a lofty spiritualisation of Christian hope and faith, make these discourses some of the richest treasures of the Biblical literature. But to historical genuineness they can of course make just as little claim as the previous Johannine discourses, indeed, even less, since the points of attachment in the Synoptic narrative which are elsewhere present are here almost entirely lacking. The Evangelist is here drawing from the depths of his own Christian experience, in which the spirit of the Pauline Gospel

was most intimately penetrated with the Hellenistic mode of thought.

As the teacher of wisdom in Wisd. vi. 19 describes the result of wisdom as "incorruption in nearness to God," and as Paul describes death as a gain because it will bring him where he will be "at home with the Lord," so the Johannine Christ comforts His disciples, in view of His impending departure, with the promise that He will prepare a place for them in the many mansions which are in His Father's house (xiv. 2 f.). The yearning gaze of the Christian Hellenist is no longer directed, like that of the primitive community (Acts i. 6), towards the future establishment of an earthly kingdom of Christ at His visible return, but towards abiding in that higher world of incorruptible life in the presence of God in which Plato had long ago recognised the true home of our souls, though to discover the way of approach and entrance to it had baffled the wisdom of pre-Christian Hellenism. But it was this "way" that the Christian had found in Christ, in whom God, who had been removed afar off, had again come near in the guise of a true human life. And so the Evangelist makes Him say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. He who seeth me seeth the Father" (xiv. 6, 9). Then He promises to those who believe in Him that they shall do greater works than He Himself does, because He is going to the Father and so will communicate to them perfect fellowship with God, in virtue of which all their petitions in His name are secure of fulfilment. They are not to be left orphaned after His departure, for at His petition the Father will send another

advocate,<sup>1</sup> the Spirit of Truth, who shall abide with them, while the world cannot receive Him or understand Him. Therefore also the world will not be able to perceive that Christ is alive, but the believers who receive His Spirit will recognise His life in God, because they themselves will be partakers of it. He who loves Him and shows it by keeping His commandments shall be loved by the Father, and the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with him. This most intimate fellowship with God and Christ, which is the portion of devout love to Christ, will be brought into being by His departure, through which the coming of the Spirit, or of Christ as the Spirit, will be made possible; therefore the disciples are not to grieve at His departure, but rather to rejoice.

In this Johannine mysticism Philo's conceptions of the indwelling of God and of the Divine Logos in the pure soul<sup>2</sup> come into contact with the Pauline thoughts of the believer's being in Christ, and Christ's living in us. The Pauline view expounded in 1 Cor. ii. regarding the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world, and of the incapacity of the natural man to understand the things of God, is

<sup>1</sup> If the Holy Spirit as Christ's representative is "the other Advocate" (παράκλητος), Christ Himself must be thought of as, properly, the first Paraclete, as, indeed, he is actually called in 1 John ii. 1. This designation is borrowed from Philo, who often calls the Logos the παράκλητος, as being the intercessor for men.

<sup>2</sup> *De Somn.*, i. 23. Ταῖς τῶν ἄκρως ἐκκεκαθαρμένων διανοίαις μόνος καὶ ἀόρατος ὁ τῶν ὅλων θεὸς καὶ ἡγεμὼν ἐμπεριπατεῖ. Σπούδασον οὖν, ὦ ψυχὴ, θεοῦ οἶκος γενέσθαι, ἱερὸν ἅγιον ("The sole and invisible God and Governor of the Universe walks about in the minds of those who are completely purified. Give diligence, then, O soul, to become a house of God, a holy sanctuary").

also recalled by John xiv. 17-27. The close of chapter xiv., "Rise up and let us go hence," is taken from the Gethsemane scene in Mark xiv. 42, and in John ought clearly to introduce the departure from the farewell meal to go out to Gethsemane. But as this does not really follow till xviii. 1, it may be conjectured that the Evangelist originally intended to close the farewell discourse at this point, and only later added the three following chapters. As a matter of fact these contain, for the most part, variations and expansions of the thoughts of chapter xiv. The thought of the intimate fellowship between the believers and Christ, which is described in xiv. 20 as an indwelling of each in the other, is expanded in xv. 1-17 under the figure of the vine and the branches. This figure of the vine and its branches had been used in Ps. lxxx. 8-17 of the people of God and its members, subsequently personified as the Son of Man whom God chose, and the man of His right hand, so that it was not a long step to the application of it to Christ the Son of Man. So, too, in Eccles. xxiv. 17 the Divine Wisdom had compared itself with a vine which puts forth fair shoots and has for its fruit glory and riches. From these earlier passages the comparison of Christ with the vine seems to be sufficiently explained, but it is not to be denied that the peculiar addition "I am the vine, the *true* vine," makes the impression that some kind of antithesis is here intended. But what the Evangelist had in mind we cannot know with certainty; possibly there is a polemical allusion to Chiliastic dreams (such as are recorded by Papias and Irenæus) regarding the miraculously fruitful vines and branches of the millennial Kingdom, which perhaps attached them-

selves to the Synoptic saying of Jesus about drinking the fruit of the vine new in the Kingdom of God (Mark xiv. 25 and parallels). Another conjecture which calls for notice is that the Evangelist may here have alluded to the symbolical meaning of the vine in the Dionysiac Mysteries, intending to contrast with the nature-mystery which is there expressed in this symbol, the true ethical mystery of the Christian's union of faith with Christ as the true source of strength and life.<sup>1</sup> These, as we have indicated, are mere conjectures, over which, in the absence of a definite foundation for them, there is no use in disputing.

To the description of the intimate union of the disciples with Christ is attached as its reverse side the enmity of the world against Christ and His people, and this, again, gives occasion to a renewed promise of the sending of the Holy Spirit, who will sustain the community of His followers in their struggle with the hostile world. When He shall come, He will convince the world of the sin of its unbelief, and of righteousness—that is to say, of the Divine justice of Christ's cause as proved by His exaltation, and of the judgment which has gone forth against the Prince of this world (the devil) (xvi. 8 ff.). But the Spirit shall also lead the Christian community on into the knowledge of all truth, beyond what Jesus has personally told them, which, in consequence of their imperfect receptivity, is still incomplete. But even the Spirit will speak nothing of Himself, but only what he hears (from God); and because what He shows them will be drawn from Christ's own nature, which is also that of the Father,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Pfeleiderer, *Die Philosophie des Heraclit*, p. 379 f.



it will serve to glorify Christ. By those statements the Evangelist aimed at justifying his own new and peculiar presentation of Christ's Person and teaching. This goes, he is well aware, beyond the older tradition of what Jesus had personally said to His disciples, but the advance rests upon a new revelation of the same Spirit of Truth which had already spoken in Jesus. Therefore this new revelation of the Spirit ought not to be, and must not be, set in opposition with the revelation of the historical Jesus, preserved in the tradition of the Christian community, as the Gnostics wished, nor must it, as it did with the Gnostics, tend to the obscuring of the Person of the Saviour. Instead of that, being nothing else than Spirit of His Spirit, it can only serve to the glorification, the transfiguration, of His historical figure in the faith of the devout community. This is exactly the kind of mediation between tradition and Spirit to which Paul had opened the way by his dictum "the Lord is the Spirit." And here, as there, the decisive factor which brings forth from the Jesus of history the supra-historical Spirit of the Lord, like the fruit from the seed (xii. 24), is the death of the Saviour, which was His departure to the Father, His entry into glory. Therefore the grief which His disciples now feel at His departure is only the birth-pang of an imperishable joy which they shall possess in their renewed and abiding spiritual union with Him. In that day they will have nothing more to ask Him—this repudiates the question in Acts i. 6 about the time of the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel as no longer suitable to Christians—for their joy is already fulfilled in that they may be confident of the hearing of all their peti-

tions offered in Christ's name for His sake, because the Father loves those who love Christ. It is true that in the immediate future they will faint-heartedly scatter, and leave Him alone; but He is not alone, because the Father is with Him. This He has told them, that in Him they may have peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (xvi. 32 f.).

At this point the Evangelist again, as at the close of chapter xiv., has recourse to his Synoptic materials, combining the prediction of the scattering of the disciples (Mark xiv. 27) with the consoling promise of the possession of the Kingdom of God in Luke (xxii. 29; cf. xii. 32). In the same passage, however, Luke had also made Jesus say to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when later thou turnest again, then strengthen thy brethren." The prayer which is here only mentioned is given by the Fourth Evangelist in full, and put in place of the prayer in Gethsemane. He had a special reason for doing this, since the latter prayer seemed, for his exalted Christology, no longer quite appropriate, and so he had alluded to it earlier, making it the mere suggestion of a possibility (xii. 27). He now substitutes for it the intercessory farewell prayer of Jesus in chapter xvii., in which the painful resignation of Gethsemane gives place to the lofty confidence of victory which marks that earlier prayer in Luke x. 21 in which Jesus celebrated in anticipation the victory over the heathen world. The prayer begins with the petition, recalling xii. 23, that the Father, now that the pre-destined hour of fulfilment had come, would glorify the Son; as He had already given Him authority over all flesh (mankind) with the task of

giving them eternal life, consisting in the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ as having been sent by Him.<sup>1</sup> This task He has now fulfilled by revealing the Father's name to the chosen ones whom He has given Him; and they have received His words, and recognised with a faith-born knowledge His Divine mission. Therefore He now prays for the community of those who belong to Him and to the Father, which at His departure He leaves behind him in the world, that the Father will keep them in the fellowship with Him and with one another which has been established by the revelation of His name, guard them from the evil of the world, and sanctify them through the truth of His word for their mission to the world, in which they are to carry on Christ's mission to the world; He Himself has made Himself a consecratory offering for them, that they also may be a truly consecrated possession of God. And in this petition He includes all those who shall in the future belong to the community of the faithful. As they now have part in the glory of the Son, which he possesses in virtue of His close fellowship with God the Father, having been taken up into this same fellowship of perfect union of life and love with the Father and the Son, so He desires that they may be with Him for ever, and may behold and share His heavenly glory also, which He, as the Beloved of the Father, possessed before the founda-

<sup>1</sup> According to Philo, too (*Quod det. pot. insid.*, xxiv.) the knowledge of God—whom he likewise often describes as the sole true God—is “the summit of happiness and blessedness.” Although both here and in John “knowledge” is thought of as including practical recognition and worship, yet in both cases the Gnosticising tendency of Hellenism is not to be mistaken,

tion of the world. The world has not known God, but He has known Him, and has declared to those who are His this knowledge of the Father, and will continue to declare it, that the love of the Father which he knows Himself to possess, and therefore His own nature (as Son), may come to be in them.

In the story of the Passion in chapters xviii. and xix. the Fourth Evangelist follows the outlines of the Synoptic tradition more closely than elsewhere, but not without introducing numerous special traits, of allegorical significance. The statement in xviii. 1 that Jesus went over "the brook of Cedars" to a garden (the name Gethsemane is omitted), so far from being a mere exact historical reminiscence, is merely based on a typological allusion to David's flight across the "Brook Kidron," for which the Evangelist, following a wrong Septuagint rendering, gives "the brook of Cedars." The Synoptic account of the agony in Gethsemane, which was anticipated in a different form at xii. 27, is here omitted, as it no longer appeared appropriate to the Johannine Christ. By way of compensation, John introduces into the story of the arrest the trait, peculiar to him, that the Temple police, with whom he associates in the arrest a Roman cohort, at Jesus' word "I am he," twice<sup>1</sup> fell to the ground—a trait of which the historical impossibility is as obvious as its allegorical significance. It is intended to illustrate Jesus' supernatural superiority to His enemies, and therefore the voluntariness of His submission to His sufferings, and is thus a symbolical embodiment of the thought which John makes Jesus express at an earlier point (x. 18), and which, in a slightly different form, Matthew

<sup>1</sup> So the author.

also has put into His mouth at the arrest (Matt. xxvi. 53).

In place of the trial before the actual high priest Caiaphas, John gives a trial before the former high priest Annas, which is certainly unhistorical. Perhaps his intention was by suppressing the trial before Caiaphas to get rid of the, to him, unsympathetic, because too Jewish-sounding, Messianic confession which the Synoptists record as uttered at this trial. Also the statement that one of the officials of the court who was standing by gave Jesus a blow on the face is peculiar to John, and is highly improbable: it is doubtless to be explained as a reminiscence from the examination of Paul before the Council (Acts xxiii. 2 f.).

As regards Peter's denial, John does not make it clear whether it took place in the house of Annas, or of Caiaphas, or of both. Especially remarkable is the way in which Peter here gets access to the high priest's palace through the good offices of another, unnamed, disciple who was an acquaintance of the high priest and went in with Jesus. Probably we are to understand by this unnamed person the beloved disciple John, who is also indicated in this veiled way elsewhere. Now it is certainly difficult to believe of the real Apostle John—a Galilæan fisherman who had come to Jerusalem only a week before—that he was acquainted with the high priest; but the John of the Asia Minor legend had ascribed to him some kind of high-priestly dignity: that might well have been the reason which led our Evangelist to make his John an acquaintance of the high-priestly house. And in this way the fearless conduct of this disciple, who was known in the high priest's house, in entering

along with Jesus, would at the same time furnish an effective foil for the cowardly denial of Peter, who also appears elsewhere in this Gospel as thrown into the shade by the beloved disciple.

In the proceedings before Pilate, John betrays still more clearly than his predecessor Luke a double purpose. On the one hand, the complete political innocence of Christ (and of Christianity) must be formally and expressly attested by the Roman government itself, and on the other, all the guilt of the death of Jesus must be laid at the door of Jewish malignity. The former purpose is served by the utterance which John puts into the mouth of Jesus: "My kingdom is not of this world. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness of the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." While it may be admitted that the thought of this utterance is not foreign to the mind of Jesus (*cf.* Mark xii. 17; Luke xii. 14), its form is so specifically Johannine, that on this account alone its unhistorical character could not be doubted, quite apart from the silence of the older tradition and the contradiction with the statement of the earliest Evangelist that Jesus, after briefly assenting when asked if He was the King of the Jews, gave Pilate no further answer (Mark xv. 5). Moreover, this utterance, in which Jesus acknowledges Himself King in the realm of truth, is the Johannine counterpart, and doubtless an intentional correction, of the Messianic confession which the Synoptists report as uttered at the trial before Caiaphas, a confession which had its origin in the tradition of the primitive Palestinian church, and gave expression to its still mainly earthly and Jewish

Messianic idea. A comparison of these two confessions enables us to measure the whole width of the difference which separated the Apostolic Church's belief in Christ from that of the Hellenistic Evangelist. As regards the representation, in which he follows Luke, that Pilate repeatedly declared the innocence of Jesus and his own desire to set Him at liberty, and in the end only yielded to the pressure of the Jews, it has been already remarked in an earlier volume that the historical ground of this representation is probably to be sought, not so much in the actual trial of Jesus as in the course of events at later trials of Christians.

When Jesus is led away to be crucified, we are told that He went forth bearing His cross for Himself (xix. 17). This contradiction of the Synoptic statement that Simon of Cyrene bore the cross of Jesus (Mark xv. 21) is too striking to be considered accidental. In view of all the earlier similar cases we cannot ascribe to the Fourth Evangelist a correction of the older tradition on the ground of more accurate knowledge of the historical circumstances, the less so as it is impossible to see any reason why the mention of Simon as the cross-bearer should have found its way into the earlier tradition if it did not rest upon historical reminiscence. Accordingly it only remains to seek the reason for the divergence of the Fourth Evangelist in a definite purpose on his part. And such a purpose can be conjectured with a good deal of probability. Among the Basilidean Gnostics the legend had arisen that it was not Christ Himself who was crucified, but Simon of Cyrene in His stead; the ground, therefore, is to be cut from beneath this legend by the total suppression of all mention of this

supposed impersonator of Jesus. This conjecture becomes all the more probable since we shall find a little further on another polemical allusion to a similar Gnostic legend.

The Johannine statement that the inscription on the cross was written by Pilate in three languages is a symbol of the universal significance of the death of Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

In the dividing of His garments by lot the older tradition had already found a fulfilment of Ps. xxii. 18. John wished to establish this fulfilment still more exactly, and therefore distinguishes between two synonymous clauses of the original; they divided the garments and they cast lots for the tunic, thus making two distinct operations out of it. This gave him at the same time occasion for a significant piece of symbolism with a double application. The tunic was not to be divided, but given by lot, because it was without seam, woven in one piece. The same was the case with the official garment of the high priest, which Philo also for that reason makes a symbol of the Logos, which, without itself undergoing division, holds together the parts of the universe. Accordingly, this tunic of Christ which must not be divided is primarily a symbol of His high-priestly office.

But further, in view of the frequent comparison of the body with a garment, it is possible to understand by this indivisible tunic the indivisibility of the body of Christ, *i.e.* according to the familiar Pauline terminology, the Christian community, so that the words "let us not divide it" contain an allegorical allusion to the unity of the Church, which must not be divided by heresies. A double allegory of this



kind is quite in the manner of our Evangelist, as it was in Philo's, whose footsteps he follows.

Whereas according to Mark xv. 40 none of the followers of Jesus was in the immediate proximity of the cross, only some women disciples watching from a distance, the Fourth Evangelist, on the contrary, represents the mother of Jesus and the beloved disciple (John) as present, and records a saying of the Crucified in which He entrusts this disciple, as His brother and representative, with the care of His mother. What Jesus had said, according to Mark iii. 34, of His disciples in general, "Behold my mother and my brethren!" is here applied to John in particular, in order to describe the ideal disciple, from the Fourth Gospel point of view, as the true spiritual brother of the Lord and the proper head and leader of the community; probably in implied contrast with James, the literal brother of Jesus and head of the primitive community at Jerusalem, in whom our Evangelist was unwilling to recognise the true spiritual kinsman of Christ.

While the Synoptic tradition represents the death of Jesus as accompanied by miraculous phenomena in nature, John has omitted these as of less importance and introduced instead an episode, peculiar to his Gospel, of allegorical significance. In xix. 31-37 he relates that of the body of Jesus not a bone was broken, but that His side was pierced by a lance-thrust and out of the wound flowed blood and water. How highly significant this trait, which he alone records, is for our Evangelist, he shows by the strong emphasis which he lays on the attestation of it by the faithful witness, that is, the beloved disciple John, who alone (according to his account) was present at the

cross. By so doing he points at the same time to the origin and aim of his narrative. The quotation in verse 37, "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced," comes from Zech. xii. 10, where it refers to the penitent turning of Israel to the God whom they have treated with contumely. It had, however, been already applied to Christ by the John of the Apocalypse (i. 7), "Every eye shall see him (Christ when He comes again upon the clouds), and they who pierced him," where it is doubtful whether the word pierced (ἐξέκέντησαν) is used in a metaphorical sense, as in the original, or in a literal sense; and the sense of the similar word (κατακεντήσαντες) in the allied passage in Barnabas (vii. 9) is similarly ambiguous. And just as it has often happened elsewhere that a pictorial expression of this kind has become in the Gospel narrative an actual occurrence (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Matt. xxvii. 34), so the Fourth Evangelist has here made the apocalyptic saying of Zechariah into the actual incident of the piercing of Jesus' body, and has appealed for the truth of it to the witness of John; really, that is to say, to that of the author of the Apocalypse, who was also for him the Apostle and the beloved disciple. But what made the occurrence peculiarly significant for him was his anti-Gnostic interest. He desired to establish the reality of the death of Christ, which the Docetæ denied, by a visible occurrence, and to prove this by the evidence of John the beloved disciple, that is to say, by the very disciple who according to the Leucian *Acts of John* withdrew during the crucifixion to the Mount of Olives and there witnessed an appearance of the "light-form" of Christ, who told him that the crucifixion on Golgotha was only a semblance and

a spectacle for the multitude, by which he, the very Christ, was in reality quite untouched (*v. sup.*, vol. iii. p. 175 ff.). This Gnostic legend, the counterpart to that of the crucifixion of Simon of Cyrene instead of Jesus, could not be more completely refuted by the Evangelist than by making John, the beloved disciple, the witness of the death of Christ upon the cross, which was put beyond doubt by the lance-thrust. The outflow of blood and water served primarily as an indication that the death of Jesus had really taken place, but also as a symbol of the thought that the mystic saving powers contained in the water of baptism and the blood of the Lord's Supper were an immediate and real effluence from the Person of the Saviour, and especially an effect of His real and not merely simulated death.

The Johannine representation of the resurrection events is thoroughly distinctive. It is true that here, as almost always elsewhere, he takes Luke as his basis and therefore transfers the scene of all the appearances to Jerusalem (for the Galilæan appearance belongs to an appendix from another hand). But in these events at Jerusalem he is concerned to distinguish more definitely the different points of interest which come into view; and by an artistic division of the various scenes, by retarding, enhancing, and intensifying the action, to produce a dramatically vivid narrative. Accordingly he gives as the first impression the negative event in the experiences of the resurrection day, the finding of the grave empty, and this experience is thrice repeated, first by Mary Magdalene, then by John, and finally by Peter. Only then does the positive impression follow, first through the angels, who, however, here only ask a

question, and impart nothing; then Jesus Himself appears, not to the disciples but to Mary Magdalene, and still in the neighbourhood of the tomb. Then, but not until the evening of the day, does Jesus appear in the midst of the disciples, who are assembled behind closed doors, Thomas, however, being absent. Finally, eight days later; this appearance is repeated before the whole eleven, and on this occasion the last remnant of the doubt of which Thomas is the representative is dispelled.

To come to detail. The association of the two disciples, which is peculiar to this Gospel (xx. 3-8), is remarkable. Whereas in Luke it is only Peter who on receiving the message of the women hastens to the grave (in Mark and Matthew none of the disciples do so), the Fourth Evangelist makes the beloved disciple accompany Peter, but take precedence of him both on the road and in the dawning of his faith. This is obviously an allegorical expression of the thought that the spiritual Johannine Christianity of Asia could claim precedence over the Petrine Christianity of Rome.

The meeting of the risen Christ with Mary Magdalene (verses 11-18) is very skilfully depicted. Her eager search and inquiry after the beloved Lord, and then her endeavour to grasp Him when she found Him, as if she would never let Him go, is copied from the "Bride" in the Song of Solomon, who pictures her seeking and finding thus (iii. 1-4): "I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but found him not. . . . The watchmen that go about the city met me: Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them when I found him whom my soul loveth: I

held him, and will not let him go again." The desire to hold fast One who already belongs to the higher world, and who for that reason will not let Himself be held back by any earthly lords, reminds us of the similar attempt of the disciples of Elijah at his translation, and of the desire of Jesus' disciples to build tabernacles upon the Mount of Transfiguration. According to the Lucan tradition, the Lord, at His departure, gave the disciples the commission to preach the Gospel throughout the world, and the promise of the Spirit, which they subsequently received on the day of Pentecost. According to John, on the other hand, the risen Christ communicated His Spirit directly to His disciples by the mystical symbolic act of breathing on them—in imitation of the breathing of man's soul into him by the creative breath-of-life of God (Gen. ii. 7; cf. 1 Cor. xv. 45); at the same time it illustrates the thought, on which John lays stress, that the Holy Spirit of the community of disciples is an effluence from the Person of Christ Himself and therefore His *alter ego*, His abiding presence with His own.

The further appearance of Jesus before the whole of the disciples has the effect of dispelling the last remnants of doubt which Thomas had continued to cherish. The test of touching Him is also found in Luke. There, it is to confirm the corporeal reality of the risen Jesus, even to "flesh and bones"; that, however, may have appeared to our more spiritual Evangelist as too material a conception. He doubtless thought of the body of the risen Jesus as having undergone a heavenly transfiguration and therefore as without earthly materiality, but nevertheless, as regards its form, exactly similar to the earthly body,

even to the marks of the wounds. The consequence of this manifestation was the confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" It is the repetition, with a more exalted Christology, of Peter's confession in vi. 69. The answer of Jesus, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed," is yet another expression of the higher value assigned in several former passages to a faith which, on the bare word, without the material support of signs and wonders, recognises the Divine in Christ. This does not, of course, prevent our Evangelist from attaching importance to miracles as aids to an incipient faith, as is evident from the fact that in his miracle stories he has constantly far outdone the older Evangelists.

The concluding statement in verse 30 f. forms the counterpart to Luke's introduction. But whereas there the Evangelist declares his intention of aiming at accuracy and completeness of presentation, in order thereby to produce a firm conviction regarding the historical basis of the Christian faith, the Fourth Evangelist does not profess to aim at historical completeness, but has selected (and, we may add, has treated) his material in accordance with the requirements of his doctrinal purpose. This purpose is, to lead his readers to believe in Christ as the Son of God, in the higher sense of essential Deity (verse 28), in order that they might have eternal life in His name, that is to say, in their belief in the higher nature of Christ which is implied in the name "Son of God," or in the perfect self-revelation of God which has appeared in Him. By this statement the Evangelist himself indicates that his book is not really intended as a historical work, but as a didactic work, in which the historical material is only the subordinate and

unessential medium for the presentment of dogmatic ideas. And this is exactly what we have found throughout; we have everywhere recognised the historical form as a transparent allegorisation of religious and dogmatic conceptions.

In chapter xxi. we have an appendix by another author, who probably also stood godfather to the book at its christening and reception into the Church. The purpose of this appendix was, in the first place, to supplement the Johannine account of the resurrection appearances, which attached itself exclusively to the Lucan tradition in making Jerusalem the scene of these, by adding a Galilæan appearance, and thus providing a harmonistic compromise between the later and earlier form of the tradition, as the harmonistic Gospel according to Matthew had already done in its own fashion. In the second place the relation between the apostolic rivals John and Peter was to be adjusted in a form acceptable to the consciousness of the Church Catholic; the striking pre-eminence given to John in this Gospel was to be softened down, and Peter was to be restored to the place of honour which was already accorded to him in the Church. The material for this completely allegorical narrative was taken by the author from Luke's allegory of Peter's draught of fishes (v. 1-11), modified to suit his purpose. In both cases, after previous ineffectual toil, a plentiful catch is made at Jesus' word; in John the number of fishes is given as 153, which, according to Hengstenberg's probably correct interpretation, is to be understood as the number of the heathen nations which are to be converted to Christianity. A point

of difference is that while in Luke the net breaks, owing to the quantity of fish, and the fishes have to be divided between two boats, here the net remains unbroken and the fishes are all brought into one boat, symbolising the indivisible Church. The risen Christ then eats with His disciples, in imitation of Luke xxiv. 41 f. Then follows the restoration of Peter. His threefold denial is balanced by the threefold confession of his love to Jesus, who also three times promises him the office of shepherd of His lambs and sheep, that is to say, of His Church as a whole, but at the same time foretells His future martyrdom. To the beloved disciple, on the contrary, is promised the distinction of remaining until Christ comes. Since the author subjoins to this the explanation that the promise is not meant in the sense that he will never die, he can only have understood this saying in the metaphorical sense that the spiritual Christianity, the Asia Minor Gnosis, represented by the beloved disciple and expressed in the Fourth Gospel, would retain its value for all time, even though the outward guidance of the Church should fall into the hands of the practical Peter, that is, of the Roman Church, which took the name of Peter as its watchword. By this admission that the rôle of leader belonged pre-eminently to Roman Petrine Christianity, the Johannine Gnosis purchased its own right to exist, and secured for itself an entrance into the Western Church.



## THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES

### CHAPTER IV

#### THE FIRST EPISTLE

THE writing which has come down to us under the title "The First Epistle of John" is not, properly speaking, an epistle at all. Neither author nor addressees are named; there is no salutation at the beginning or end, and no reference to any specific circumstances in an individual Church. It is an Encyclical to the Christian churches, which aims at confirming them in the true faith of the Church by refuting the dangerous Gnostic teachers of error. A definite division of the contents is not possible, since the author is constantly coming back by various paths to those fundamental thoughts which he has most at heart. But we can distinguish an introduction, a main central portion which can be subdivided into three parts, and a conclusion.

The introduction, i. 1-4, bears a remarkable resemblance to the prologue of the Gospel. As the prologue takes for its starting-point the Logos who was at the beginning with God, and was the Life and Light of the world, and through His incarnation was so manifested that His glory could become an object of perception and testimony to the community of

believers, so the Epistle begins with a statement which may be described as a succinct version, in different words, of the same thought. "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life; and truly the life was manifested, and we have seen, and we testify and declare unto you also the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us; what [therefore] we have seen and heard we declare unto you, that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is [also] with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And thus we write unto you that our joy may be fulfilled." The author writes as representing the consciousness of the Church as a community, which feels itself to be in such complete solidarity with the first witnesses of the revelation in Christ that it can appropriate their experience to itself, inasmuch as their seeing, hearing, and handling of the eternal life which has appeared in Jesus Christ is permanently operative in the spiritual perception of faith (*cf.* iii. 6). It remains uncertain, and is perhaps intended to remain so, whether he himself personally belonged to the first witnesses or not. He does not say, "I have seen, heard, handled," but *we*, that is, primarily the first witnesses, but along with them all those also who stand on the ground of the apostolic tradition, and believe, with the Church, in the bodily manifestation of the Divine Life in the human Person of Jesus. In like manner Irenæus reckons himself among those who "see our Lord Jesus Christ, and hear His voice with our ears" (*c. Hær.*, V. i. 1). The important point for these Church teachers is the refutation

of docetic error, and in that they all felt themselves to be united in solidarity with the primitive apostolic community, whose testimony finds its permanent echo in the faith of the Church. It is not to be overlooked, however, that the primitive community did not, like the Fourth Evangelist, see in Jesus the incarnate God-Logos, but a man filled with the Divine Spirit and Life. It was doubtless from a consciousness of this distinction, and in order to soften it down, that our author has avoided speaking of the personal Logos, who was with God (as a distinct entity) and was the Life of the world, and instead speaks only of "the word of life" and "the eternal life which was with the Father" as the subject of the manifestation. For the concrete subject the Logos he has substituted its abstract content "Life," and has thus adapted to the faith of the Christian community the Evangelist's new doctrine of Christ.

As in the prologue to the Gospel life is followed by light as the second attribute of the Logos, so here light, not indeed as an attribute of the Logos but of God, forms the keynote of the first section (i. 5-ii. 17). Since God is Light, only he who walks in the light can have fellowship with Him; that is, he who keeps His commandments and guards himself in every possible way from sin, but not less from the self-deception of an imagined sinlessness, confessing, rather, his actual sins humbly, and hoping for their forgiveness at the hands of the faithful and righteous God (Rom. iii. 25), to which we have a claim through the intercession of Jesus Christ, who is the propitiation for our sin and for the sin of the whole world. Especially is the fact of "being in the light" to be

shown (not in an arrogant separation, after the fashion of the heretics, but) in brotherly love, the new commandment (John xiii. 34), which has been established since the true Light began to shine, but which is also for his readers the old commandment, because they have known it since ever they became Christians. He who loves his brother abides in the light, because in this loving spirit there is no stumbling-block, that is, temptation to sin. On the contrary, he who hates his brother walks in darkness, not knowing whither he is going, and therefore exposed to all kinds of dangers, because his eyes are blinded by the darkness—that is to say, his moral judgment is held in abeyance by the blind instinct of selfishness. His readers, however, are not in this miserable condition, and the author can therefore address himself to them as his spiritual children, in the confident assumption that they all, young and old alike, are in possession of the Christian salvation, which includes forgiveness of sins, the knowledge of God, and the overcoming of the evil enemy (the devil). This stands fast for ever, and these statements are therefore repeated (“I have written unto you”) in order to emphasise them as the firm foundation<sup>1</sup> of the exhortations which follow. First comes the general exhortation not to cherish the love of the world, which is opposed to the love of God, or of its transient pleasure and dazzling pomp and splen-

<sup>1</sup> This interpretation of the *ἐγγραψα* (ii. 14) seems to me more likely to be right than that which takes it as a reference to an earlier writing, the Gospel, for instance, which would have needed to be expressed more clearly, and in view of the didactic rather than hortatory purpose of the Gospel, would not be appropriate.

dour. Then follows a special warning against the antichrists, whose appearance in large numbers will be the sign of the last times, that is to say, of the nearness of the judgment of the world. (The one Antichrist of the Apocalypse, the heathen world power of Rome, is here transformed into many antichrists, the Gnostic false teachers.) These are the liars who deny that Jesus is the Christ, and who in thus denying the Son deny the Father also. His readers must not let themselves be seduced by these false teachers, who went forth, it is true, from the Church, but never really belonged to it. But indeed his readers, in virtue of the anointing of the Spirit which they have received in baptism, already possess true knowledge, and need no new and special instruction, but only to abide by the old truth which they all know. But to abide in the Father and the Son is not merely a matter of holding fast to the true confession, but also of the practical following of Christ in doing righteousness.

This forms the transition to the second section (iii. 1-24), which draws the ideal picture of the Children of God. Christians are now the children of God, not only because God has deigned to call them so, but also by nature, because they are begotten of God, and they are therefore alien to the godless world, which does not understand them. But this nature of theirs is not yet fully manifested; it will only be perfected in the future when they shall directly behold God (or Christ), and His image in His children shall be completely formed (*cf.* 2 Cor. iii. 18; Rom. viii. 29; Col. iii. 3 f.; John xvii. 24 ff.). And this very hope of future likeness to God becomes a motive-force urging Christians to purify themselves

from all that is contrary to God. Since Christ, the Sinless One, was manifested to take away sins, abiding in Him is incompatible with abiding in sin, for sin consists essentially in opposition to the Law—that is, to the will of God and purpose of Christ. Whoever, therefore, “sins” (not from weakness, as is contemplated of Christians in i. 8, but on principle, like the libertine Gnostics), in the case of such a man his boasted knowledge of God is mere delusion, by which no one ought to allow himself to be led astray. Only he who *does* righteousness is truly righteous and in harmony with the ethical nature of Christ. On the contrary, he who does sin shows himself to be related in origin and nature to the arch-sinner, the devil, the adversary of Christ, for Christ has appeared for the very purpose of destroying the works of the devil. Whoever is begotten of God does not commit sin, because His “seed” (the Divine germ of life and holy energy) is in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God (his God-related nature, by a necessity of its being, rejects sin as something hostile to itself). In this (and not in lofty sayings or speculations) consists the mark of distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil. He who does not practise righteousness, he, especially, who violates the fundamental Christian commandment of brotherly love, is not of God, but belongs to the family of Cain, the fratricide, who hated his brother just because of his righteousness. The same opposition of nature between these two fundamentally different classes of men, which showed itself thus early at the beginning of history, still manifests itself in a similar way. The world, which by its lovelessness proves its spiritual deadness, hates the Christians

because they show by their brotherly love that they have passed over from death into life (John v. 24). By the example of self-sacrificing love which Christ has shown in His death, we feel ourselves bound to show the same spirit of love, which must show itself, not in words only, but also in deed and in truth. In this active, practical brotherly love we possess the guarantee that we are of the truth, and so we shall be able to convince our hearts before Him—whatever (*ὅ τι ἐάν*) our hearts may reproach us with—that God is greater than our hearts and knows all things (knows, therefore, in spite of all our failures, our true spirit of love; *cf.* John xxi. 17, Rom. viii. 27). But if our heart does not accuse us, we have a joyful confidence towards God, which also assures us that our prayers are heard, because we keep His commandments. And these commandments are summed up in faith in the name of His Son and in brotherly love. The keeping of His commandments is the condition of our abiding in Him, and also the practical proof of the possession of His Spirit.

This forms the transition to the third section (iv. 1–v. 13), which points to the union of true faith in Christ with brotherly love as the characteristic mark of the true Christian spirit, in contrast with the deceiving spirits. As many false prophets have gone out into the world, his readers must try the spirits to see whether they are from God. The distinguishing mark of the spirit of truth as opposed to the spirit of deception is that the former recognises Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh; to deny Him is the nature of Antichrist, who, as his readers know, was to come, and is now in the world (*cf.* ii. 18). These deceiving spirits are of the world and speak

according to the mind of the world, and therefore gain the approval of the world; but the community of believers has overcome them, because the Spirit of God which is alive in them is mightier than the spirit of the world. They alone know themselves to be in possession of the true knowledge of God. He who is not of God does not listen to them. Therefore Christians must prove that they know God and have been begotten by God by showing brotherly love. He who has not love has not known God, for God is love. Love does not originate from us, but from God, who has revealed Himself to us as love by sending His only-begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Our gratitude for God's great deed of love should be shown in love towards the brethren. No man has ever seen God (John i. 18); therefore we cannot directly discharge our debt of gratitude to Him, but must pay it indirectly by loving the brethren. If we do this, He abides in us, and His love manifests itself in us as perfected—that is to say, in its full power and efficacy. Herein do we know our fellowship with Him, that He has given us of His Spirit (iii. 24). By the aid of this Spirit we recognise and confess that Jesus is the Son of God, whom the Father has sent to be the Saviour of the world, thereby making known His love towards us. Since God is love, only he who abides in love can abide in fellowship with Him. The most glorious fruit of this loving spirit is the joyful confidence which we may have in looking towards the coming Day of Judgment, since we are now in the same condition (of union with the Father) as Christ is. Perfect love drives out fear (of the judgment). And perfect



love is that which has its ground in the faith that God has first loved us, and has its manifestation in practical love towards the brethren. These two things together, therefore, form the proof of our being begotten of God: the belief that Jesus is the Christ, and love to the Father, showing itself in love to His children. Love to God consists in keeping His commandments; and these are for us not grievous, because whatsoever is begotten of God overcomes the world; the victory that overcomes the world is our faith. Only he can overcome the world who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ who came not merely with the water (by baptism) but also with the blood (of His death on the cross). And the witness of this is the Spirit, who is truth, and who works and testifies with water and blood (in the Mysteries). Therein consists the testimony, of an authority far above all human testimony, which God Himself has given concerning His Son. He who does not believe this testimony makes God a liar; but he who believes it has, with the Son, the eternal life which God has given us in Him. And this the author declares to be the aim with which he writes (*cf.* John xx. 31), viz. that his readers may know that they themselves, just because they believe in the name of the Son of God (not because they believe in some kind of Gnostic philosophy) are already in possession of eternal life.

The conclusion (verses 14-21) consists partly of supplementary, partly of recapitulatory, remarks. Christians may be certain that their petitions are heard, so far as they are in accordance with the will of God. Therefore, also, their intercession for those brethren who have committed a sin which is not unto

death gains (forgiveness and) life for those brethren. But where a sin unto death is in question, they must not make intercession for that. For though all unrighteousness is sin, not every sin is a sin unto death. Such sin the man who is begotten of God does not commit. He keeps himself (in his God-related nature) so that the enemy cannot touch him (verse 18 ; *cf.* iii. 9). We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil one (in Satan's power). We know also that the Son of God is come and has given us understanding so that we know Him to be true, and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (John xvii. 3, xx. 28 ?). The closing words sum up the polemic against the false teachers in the warning, "Little children, guard yourselves from idols !"

The second and third epistles which have come down under John's name are real letters with address and closing salutation. The author calls himself only "the Presbyter," without naming himself, and it is therefore implied that he was known to the addressees. The second letter is addressed to "the elect Lady (*ἐκλεκτῆς κυρίας*) and her children." This can hardly be an individual Christian woman, as in this case it could not very well be said that all who love the truth love her children (verse 1). It is therefore doubtless a particular Christian Church, regarded as the representative of the whole Christian Church, which is called "Lady" because it is united to the Lord Jesus Christ by, as it were, a marriage bond (*cf.* Eph. v. 32). The author expresses his joy that he has found among her children some who walk in the

truth, according to the commandment which we have received from the Father. They must continue to follow the "new" commandment of brotherly love, which, however, has been known to them from the beginning. This exhortation is suggested by the fact that many deceivers are gone out into the world who do not confess Christ as coming in the flesh, which is the mark of Antichrist. Everyone who advances (to the acceptance of Gnostic innovations) and does not abide in the teaching (of the Church) of Christ "has not" the Father and the Son, that is, he denies the Christian faith altogether. Of such an one his readers are to beware, not to receive him into their houses, not to give him any greeting, in order to avoid all fellowship with his evil works. In short, the members of the churches are peremptorily summoned to renounce all church fellowship with the heretics who are propagating their (Gnostic) innovations. The writer will have more to say on this point at his coming visit. He concludes with a greeting from the children of the sister of the recipient, by which is doubtless meant the sister-church to which the Presbyter himself belonged.

The third letter is addressed to a certain Gaius, who is praised for his walk in the truth, and urged to continue to show hospitality to journeying brethren who have gone forth as messengers of the faith, and who accept nothing from the heathen. They are therefore commended to the help and support of Christians, who in this way become fellow-workers in (the spreading of) truth. The author then goes on to complain of a certain Diotrophes, who, from his love of pre-eminence, has shown himself hostile

towards him (the writer), refuses to receive his letter to the church (? the Second Epistle of John), calumniates him with wicked words, refuses hospitality to the brethren (introduced by the writer), has hindered other members of the church, who were willing to receive them, from doing so, and has even cast them out of the church. Gaius is exhorted not to follow this bad example: such an evil doer (as Diotrephes) is not of God, and has not seen God (*cf.* 1 Ep. iii. 6, where this expression has reference to the Gnostic claim to a special knowledge of God; if this is also the case here, the arrogant conduct of Diotrephes may have been based on Gnostic intolerance towards the emissaries of a church which held the traditional faith, and to its presbyter). In contrast with Diotrephes, whom the presbyter purposes to rebuke at his impending visit to the church there, a certain Demetrius receives honourable testimony from all men, and from the truth itself, and this is confirmed by the author, who appeals to his reader's confidence in the trustworthiness of his testimony. The question, what is to be thought of this testimony, and of the authority claimed by this "presbyter," hangs together with the wider question regarding the source of the Johannine writings in general.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

### CHAPTER V

#### EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

THE tradition of the Church, established since the last quarter of the second century, has, as is well known, attributed all these writings—the Apocalypse, the Fourth Gospel, and the three Letters—to the Apostle John, although none of them directly claims to be his work. Under these circumstances it is the duty of historical criticism, on the one hand to examine the external evidences for the Church tradition, and on the other, from the internal characteristics of each of these writings, to ascertain the real state of the case, so far as that may be possible.

Justin Martyr (*Dial. c. Tr.*, lxxxii.) is the first witness for the Apostle John's authorship of the Apocalypse, but his evidence applies to the Apocalypse only, not to the Gospel or the Epistles, which he never mentions. The first and principal witness for the Apostle John's authorship of the Gospel and the First Epistle is Irenæus in his work *Against Heresies* (circa 180 A.D.). Since in this case as in others he may be considered the father of the Church tradition, we must examine his statements with

special care. In *c. Hær.* III. x. he first gives an account of the authorship of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, in substantial agreement with the well-known statement of Papias (Euseb., *H.E.*, III. xxxix.), and adds, on his own account, that Luke, the companion of Paul, recorded the Gospel preached by Paul (a statement of which the unhistorical character is patent, in view of Luke i. 1-4), and that afterwards John the disciple of the Lord, who lay upon His breast, wrote a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus. As the purpose of the Gospel, he states in III. xi. 1 that John desired to combat the error which Cerinthus, and even at a much earlier period the Nicolaitans, had brought forward, viz. that the Creator was not the same as the Father of the Lord; and further, that the Son of the Creator was not the same as the Christ who came from above. This Christ did not suffer, but having descended for a time upon Jesus the Son of the Creator, flew back again to the Pleroma. They also taught that the Monogenes was the first, but the Logos was the true Son of the Only-begotten, and that, finally, this world was not created by the Highest God but by a very subordinate Power. All this John wished to correct by stating the true doctrine of the Church regarding the One Almighty God, who had made all things by His word, etc. The combating of this same erroneous doctrine of several Fathers and several Sons (Monogenes and Logos, Christ and Jesus) was, according to III. xvi. 5, 6, 8, also the purpose of the First and Second Epistle of John, which are, however, identified by Irenæus, 2 John 7 f. being referred by him to 1 John. This statement of the purpose of the Gospel and Epistles may quite well be correct, even if the

author was not, as Irenæus asserts, the Apostle John, and not identical with the author of the Apocalypse, in which the Nicolaitans are combated. As this latter heresy, according to Irenæus' own remark, appeared "much earlier" than that of Cerinthus, the Apocalypse, in which the Nicolaitans are combated as though they had newly appeared, must be much earlier than the Gospel and Epistles, if these are supposed to be directed against Cerinthus, and therefore by a different author. We shall see later that this is actually the case, and that the two are separated by perhaps a generation.

That the apostolic authorship and authority of the Fourth Gospel was in the time of Irenæus by no means universally acknowledged without any opposition, may be recognised from the rather forced fashion in which in III. xi. 8 he seeks to prove that the Gospels must number four, from the four quarters of the earth, and the four winds, and the four living creatures associated with the form of the Cherub; like the fourfold form of the Cherub, so the fourfold form of the Gospel rests upon an ordinance of the Lord. Against this ordinance the heretics blaspheme in ignorance and perversity by wanting to have more or fewer than the four Gospels of the Church, like Marcion or those others who, on account of the prophetic Spirit promised in the Gospel according to John, reject that Gospel along with the Spirit (III. xi. 9). By this he doubtless means, not merely opponents of the Montanist enthusiasm, but more especially opponents of the "pneumatic" theology which saw in the Spirit of revelation the source of a higher knowledge of

truth, going beyond the Christian tradition; as the Johannine theology in fact did (*cf.* Apoc. xix. 10; John xvi. 13 f.; 1 John v. 6). To this class of opponents belonged the persons whom Epiphanius (*Hær.*, li. 3 f.) names "Alogi," who, without holding any other opinions opposed to those of the Church, protested against the Gospel and the Apocalypse of John as unapostolic writings whose author was the heretic Cerinthus. These people represented the average conservative opinion of the simple communities which desired to hold fast to the old evangelical tradition, and saw in the "spiritual Gospel" of John a dangerous innovation, suspiciously related to heretical Gnosticism. That there could be within the Church, as late as the time of Irenæus and the Muratorian canon, an opposition of this kind, based on evangelical conservatism, to the claim of the Johannine Gospel to be of apostolic rank, and that, moreover, precisely in these regions which were also the native home of that Gospel, is indeed a very noteworthy phenomenon, and affords strong reason for doubting the correctness of the Church tradition of which Irenæus was the representative, and which since his time has victoriously held the field.

It becomes, therefore, a very important question on what historical grounds Irenæus based his assertion. He repeatedly appeals (II. xxii. 5; III. iii. 4; V. v. 1, xxx. 1; xxxiii. 3, 4) to the "Elders" (*πρεσβύτεροι*) who had been with John, the disciple of the Lord, in Asia, where he had survived down to the time of Trajan; who had seen not only John but also others of the Apostles, and had heard various sayings of theirs, to which they testify (probably in a written source, and if so, doubtless the same which is cited in



V. xxxiii. 4, namely, the five books of the *Diegeseis*<sup>1</sup> of Papias). Irenæus had, according to III. iii. 4, in his early youth seen one of these Elders, viz. Polycarp, who had not only been a disciple of the Apostles, but had also “been appointed by the Apostles, in the church at Smyrna, bishop for Asia,” and he affirms in a letter to Florinus (Euseb., *H.E.*, V. xx. 4-7) that he still remembered exactly Polycarp’s whole appearance and his discourses, and how he used to tell about John and the other men who had seen the Lord, and how he used to quote their discourses and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord, all in accordance with the holy Scriptures. These things he had diligently listened to, and inscribed them, not on paper but in his heart, and by the grace of God had constantly remembered them. That certainly seems to be a firm basis for his tradition regarding John, but it is a pity that all the particulars which he builds upon it prove on closer examination to be completely unreliable. To take as our starting-point the last-mentioned citation (III. iii. 4): Polycarp is there said not only to have been a pupil of the Apostles, but to have been appointed by the Apostles bishop of Asia—a monstrous assertion, for which the letters of Polycarp and Ignatius give not the slightest trace of support. Though the latter contain so much about the dignity and authority of the bishops, this is never referred to apostolic appointment, but to the Divine will and the pattern of Christ; the bishops are not yet,

<sup>1</sup> “Narratives,” but apparently a slip for *Exegeseis* (“Interpretations”), the title of Papias’ work as given by Eusebius being *λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεις*.—TRANSLATOR.

therefore, the successors of the Apostles, but the representatives and instruments of God and Christ in the churches. The bishops of the different churches stand accordingly in an independent relation toward one another. There is no hint of the later hierarchic subordination. Of a "bishop of Asia" there could at that time be no question. And, further, at a period about 95-100 (for Polycarp, who was born about 69, cannot have become bishop earlier) where could the Apostles who appointed him bishop have come from? This, therefore, in any case Irenæus cannot have known of his own recollection, because it can never have happened; he must have assumed it on the basis of the presuppositions of his own time, and unconsciously made his own groundless opinion a part of his reminiscence. Is it likely to have been otherwise with the rest of his "recollections"? In II. xxii. 5 he makes an emphatic appeal to the tradition which the Elders had received from John and the other Apostles in favour of his opinion that Jesus did not teach merely for a single year as a young man of thirty, but that He had reached the age, more suitable to a teacher, of 40-50 years, for had He not come in order to hallow by His word and example every age of life, including that of advancing years? Here, therefore, a theory resting on dogmatic postulates and running directly counter to the Gospel tradition is set up by Irenæus without more ado on the basis of the tradition of the "Elders" of Asia, who had been instructed by the "Apostles." That there is here gross deception is clear, even though it remains uncertain whether it is to be put down to the account of Irenæus or of

his authorities.<sup>1</sup> And here is another example of the trustworthiness of Irenæus' tradition! According to V. xxxiii. 3 and 4, the "Elders" are supposed to have heard from the lips of the Apostle John, what Papias also, "a hearer of John and companion of Polycarp, a man of the ancient time," confirms in the fourth book of his work, that the Lord had taught that in the Kingdom of God of the Last Times every vine would have 10,000 stems, every stem 10,000 branches, every branch 10,000 shoots, every shoot 10,000 clusters, every cluster 10,000 grapes, and every grape should yield twenty-five measures of wine, and when any of the saints approached one cluster, another would cry "I am better; take me." Therefore, according to Irenæus, the Apostle John is to be made the authority for these crudely sensuous Chiliastic beliefs, and nevertheless is also to have written the spiritual, anti-chiliastic Gospel! What is to be thought of the historical value of a tradition which contradicts itself in this fashion? Moreover, the above appeal of Irenæus to Papias as the "hearer of (the Apostle) John" incurred the criticism of Eusebius, who had also read the work of Papias, and had read it more carefully than Irenæus; we owe to him the informa-

<sup>1</sup> Kreyenbühl (*Das Ev. der Wahrheit*, p. 58) speaks of the romancings (*Flunkereien*) of Irenæus, Réville (*Le iv. Evang.*, p. 12) of his amazing credulity. P. Corsen ("Monarchian. Prologe," *Texte und Untersuchungen*, xv. p. 109) gives it as his judgment that the Asiatic Presbyters were "at best a company of deceived deceivers"—for which he has of course been taken to task from the apologetic side. It is true that the historian's business is only to understand, not to pronounce judgment; but still less ought he to allow his eyes to be darkened by a blind reverence for the pillars of tradition.

tion (*H.E.*, III. xxxix. 3 f.) that Papias by no means asserts that he had been a hearer of the holy Apostles and had seen them face to face, but only says that he had received the things of the faith from those who had been in contact with them. He expresses himself, in fact, as follows: "I did not, like the multitude, take pleasure in those who say many things, but in those who teach true things; not in those who report strange commands, but in those who attest the commands given by the Lord to faith and proceeding from the truth itself. If any one came who had been a follower of the Elders, I inquired about the words of the Elders, what Andrew or Peter had said (*εἶπεν*), or Philip or Thomas, or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord. Similarly (I inquired) what Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say (*ἄτε . . . λέγουσιν*). For I did not think that I gained as much profit from that which came out of books as from that which came from the living and abiding voice." Eusebius adds the remark: "It is noteworthy that he (Papias) twice mentions the name John. The first time, he numbers him with Peter, James, Matthew and the other Apostles, and thus shows clearly that the Evangelist is referred to; the other John he mentions in a different clause, apart from the group of the Apostles, places Aristion before him, and plainly calls him 'Presbyter.' This supports the story of those who say that there were in Asia two men of the same name (John), and that in Ephesus there are two distinct tombs each of which is still called the tomb of John." In this remark of Eusebius, so much is doubtless

right: that Papias clearly *distinguishes* between the Presbyter John, whom he names along with Aristion, apart from the Apostolic group, and whose sayings still belong for him to the present (ἀ . . . λέγουσιν) and the Apostle John, whom he names next to last among the seven Apostles, and whose sayings belong to the past (τί εἶπεν). But when Eusebius from this correct interpretation of the Papias passage infers the existence of two famous men in Asia (Ephesus) bearing the name John, he does not arrive at this conclusion by the aid of the contents of the passage, but in consequence of presuppositions drawn from elsewhere. Whether his conclusion is correct is a question which for the present we leave open; the answer to it will appear later. Here the first point is to note what it is that clearly appears from the passage quoted from Papias, viz. that the latter was never a hearer of the Apostle John, nor of any other Apostle, but that he had received information emanating from the Apostles, who had lived and taught *before* his time, only through others. And in fact it had passed through two intermediaries, through the Elders, who had themselves been direct hearers of the Apostles, and through their followers, from whom, when he met them, Papias gathered information as to what the aforesaid Elders had to tell of the teachings of the Apostles. So far, then, from Papias being really an immediate disciple of the Apostles, as Irenæus asserts, he was only connected with them by two intermediate links, and is therefore only a third-hand witness of what the Apostles taught or told. Would this be possible if the Apostle John had really, as the tradition has it, lived and taught in Ephesus down to the time

of Trajan? In that case Papias would have stood so near him in time as well as in place that he would not have been under the necessity of gathering information about him at third hand. He would certainly have betaken himself directly to the apostolic source, rather than to the intermediary of the Elders, the disciples of the Apostles. But for the present we will leave these more remote consequences on one side, and go back, in the first place, to Irenæus' mistake regarding Papias' having been a disciple of the Apostles. The cause of this mistake can be clearly recognised: Irenæus has confused the Presbyter John with the Apostle, a mistake the more easily made since Papias describes them both by the same expression, "the disciple of the Lord," and since the Presbyter was without doubt an authority held in high respect in Asia Minor, who might easily, for a later generation, assume the Apostolic nimbus. But may not the same mistake which is evident in the case of Papias have been fallen into by Irenæus as regards Polycarp also? If we consider that Irenæus describes Polycarp as a "companion," that is, a fellow-disciple, of Papias, the disciple of John, the conclusion is inevitable that the teacher of Polycarp was the same John of whom Papias was a disciple; therefore not the Apostle but the Presbyter. If Irenæus could confuse these two in the case of Papias, in whose writings he could easily with a little attention have recognised the real state of the case, it was much more easily possible for him to fall into the same confusion as regards Polycarp, from whom he only remembered having heard in his earliest youth that he had been a pupil of the famous John. Who this John really was,

Irenæus can have had no "recollection," but on the basis of presuppositions drawn from a different quarter (the explanation of which will appear later) he unconsciously formed the impression that the John to whom his teacher Polycarp appealed was the Apostle, and that he had also written the Gospel. And he failed to notice the contradiction that John the Evangelist was the most decided opponent of Chiliasm, whereas Polycarp and Papias referred their crude Chiliastic beliefs to the John who was their teacher—who may therefore have been the author of the Apocalypse, but cannot possibly have been the author of the Gospel.

How easy it was at that period for a confusion of this kind to arise between a man of local celebrity and an apostle of the same name can be seen from another interesting example. In a fragment preserved by Eusebius (*H.E.*, III. xxxi. 3) of a letter from Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus and contemporary of Irenæus, to the Roman bishop Victor, we find mentioned among the Christian heroes of Asia Minor, Philip, "one of the Twelve Apostles, who is buried at Hierapolis," and also his two daughters, who died as virgins at an advanced age, one of whom was a prophetess and is buried at Ephesus, "as is also John who lay on the Lord's breast and who became a priest and wore the *petalon*, and was a martyr and teacher. He is buried at Ephesus." This Philip is evidently no other than the Evangelist (not the Apostle) whose "four virgin daughters who prophesied" are mentioned in Acts xxi. 9 and were also known to Papias (acc. Eusebius, *H.E.*, III. xxxix. 9). These daughters, with their gift of prophecy, seem to have helped to bring his name into prominence in

Asia Minor, and in consequence he gradually came to occupy the place of the obscure Apostle Philip. Exactly the same thing happened with the other and much more distinguished celebrity of Asia Minor, John the prophet, ascetic and apocalypticist. He was the more easily identified with the apostle of the same name, the less remembrance there was of the latter, who (according to a statement of Papias) had died a martyr's death long before. In the description of this man in the fragment of Polycrates the portrait of the beloved disciple of the Gospel (John xiii. 23) seems to have been combined with that of the son of Zebedee, who died a martyr's death, and with that of the author of the Apocalypse, who was a teacher and priest (in the spiritual sense, according to Apoc. i. 6), as it is commonly the case with half-historical, half-legendary figures of this kind that traits of various origin are transferred to them.<sup>1</sup> It is further to be noticed that Polycrates only speaks of one famous John who was buried at Ephesus; the Apocalypticist or Presbyter had in the legend become an Apostle. He knows nothing of two Johns side by side, any more than sober history does, which has only room for one of them in Asia Minor.

While Irenæus has nothing further to tell us of the circumstances under which the Gospel was composed by John (apart from the polemical relation to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Réville, *Le iv. Evang.*, p. 19. The confusion of the Presbyter with the Apostle and the transformation of the latter into a priest "show how far, towards the close of the second century, the Apostle John had become a legendary personality, and that even in the very town where he is supposed to have worked for years as the Apostle of Asia."



Cerinthus; *cf.* p. 94 *sup.*), by the end of the second century a legend had already grown up about this. It has come down to us in two versions: in the Muratorian Canon and in Clement of Alexandria. In the former we are told that the Fourth Gospel was written by John, one of the disciples (of the Lord). When his fellow-disciples and bishops urged him to write it he said to them, "Fast with me three days, and at the end of that time we will tell one another what has been revealed to each of us." In the same night it was revealed to the Apostle Andrew that under the supervision of them all John should write the whole in his own name. The reason why, in spite of the difference of what is taught in the different Gospels, there is yet nothing divergent from the common faith, is that under the guidance of the one Spirit all is made known in all the Gospels concerning the birth (of the Lord), concerning His sufferings, His resurrection, His intercourse with His disciples and His twofold coming—the first, which has taken place in lowliness and simplicity, and the second, which is to take place in royal power and glory. "What reason is there to be surprised"—so closes the statement—"that John in his Epistles also so strongly emphasises one particular point, saying of himself, 'What we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, that write we unto you'?" In saying this he declares himself to be not only the witness with his own eyes and ears, but also the historian of all the miracles of the Lord in their connection." From Clement of Alexandria a statement has been preserved by Eusebius (*H.E.*, VI. xiv. 7), that the Apostle John, urged by his friends (*γνώριμοι*), and

under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel, because the other Evangelists had recorded only the outward events. These two statements agree, therefore, in so far that John wrote the Gospel in response to the wishes of those about him, and under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. But according to the Muratorian Canon those who urged him to write it were "his fellow disciples and bishops" (*cohortantibus condiscipulis et episcopis suis*), that is to say, his colleagues in the apostolate and episcopate (!), which implies that the Gospel was written in Jerusalem before the separation of the Apostles, quite in accordance with the subsequent statement that Paul, "following the example of John" (Apoc. ii., iii.), had written to exactly seven churches. The Gospel is further said to have been written under the supervision of all the Apostles, so that the Apostolic College undertook, so to speak, to guarantee jointly the correctness of what John had written. By this, as well as by the guidance of the one Spirit, the agreement in the contents of all the Gospels, in spite of their differences in detail, is supposed to be guaranteed. It is clearly to be recognised from this express emphasising of the harmony between the Gospels that this was at that time disputed by many; that is to say, it was asserted by many that the Gospel of John did not agree with the older Gospels; and this reminds us of what was said above about the "Alogi" (p. 96 *sup.*). How serious must have been the doubts felt, down to near the end of the second century, regarding the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel, if such downright fables as those contained in the legend in the Muratorian Canon were necessary to allay them!

The version of the legend given by Clement of Alexandria is a little more sober, inasmuch as the request that John should write a Gospel does not come from the Apostolic College, but, more vaguely, from the circle of his friends; and it is not so much the agreement of John with the other Gospels in regard to all the Gospel miracle-stories, but the difference and the pre-eminence of the "spiritual" Gospel as compared with the other Gospels, which only narrated outward things (*σωματικά*), that is here emphasised.

To follow the growth of legend regarding the Fourth Gospel down beyond the second century is, for our purpose, unnecessary. On the other hand, we must continue the examination of witnesses from Irenæus upwards to the beginning of the second century. In the process it will appear that the statements of the witnesses become the more uncertain the further we go back from the time of Irenæus towards the beginning of the century, and that just at the point where, from the proximity in place and time of the traditional composition of the Gospel, we were justified in expecting the clearest testimonies, they wholly disappoint us and fall silent.

Among the Apologists, Theophilus of Antioch, a contemporary of Irenæus, is the first who mentions the author of the Fourth Gospel by name. In his Apology addressed to Autolytus (written about 180) he says (ii. 22): "Thus the holy Scriptures and all those who hear the Spirit teach, among whom John says, 'In the beginning was the word.'" He doubtless means the Apostle, although he does not expressly describe him as such, but only as a "bearer of the Spirit," *i.e.* an inspired man, such as the other

Biblical writers were. For Apollinaris also, who followed Papias as bishop of Hierapolis, the Fourth Gospel was already an authoritative writing, whose evidence he uses in the Paschal controversy in opposing the usage in Asia Minor, which was based upon the Synoptic tradition (celebration of the 14th Nisan). Tatian, the pupil of Justin, combined the four Gospels into a Harmony (*Diatessaron*), the material being taken chiefly from Matthew and John; the former, however, determines the order of the narrative, while the sections (*pericopes*) of John are fitted into the Synoptic scheme. From this it may be concluded that Tatian did not yet regard the Fourth Gospel as standing on the same footing as the Synoptic Gospels as a source for the history of Jesus, and therefore cannot have held it to be the work of the Apostle John. The position is similar in regard to Tatian's master, Justin.<sup>1</sup> It is no doubt possible that he knew the Fourth Gospel and used it as a doctrinal writing, of which, especially as regards the Logos Christology, he adopted the ideas, but he never cites it by name, whereas he does describe the Apocalypse as a work of the Apostle John; nowhere does he make a verbal quotation from the Fourth Gospel, as he often does from the others; the latter, and they only, determine his view of the evangelical history and doctrine; indeed he says expressly in regard to the discourses of Jesus that they were

<sup>1</sup> A direct use of the Gospel of John by Justin cannot be asserted with confidence, any more than it can be denied. For the points of contact, which are certainly numerous, are always of such a kind that there can be no question of quotation, and that the possibility of a common source in the ideas current at that time, and especially in the Apocryphal Gospels, is always open.

“short and terse” (Ap. i. 14), which almost amounts to a direct rejection of the long dialectical discourses of the Fourth Gospel. From all this we must conclude that Justin, even though he perhaps knew the Fourth Gospel, did not in any case recognise it as a work of the Apostle John; he certainly did not reckon it among the “Memoirs of the Apostles,” which rank for him as authoritative. The same may be asserted of Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis and contemporary of Justin. Whether the statement of Eusebius (*H.E.*, III. xxxix. 17) that he used the First Epistle of John is correct or not—a point which we cannot determine, since we no longer possess the work of Papias—so much at least is certain, that he neither attested nor knew of a Gospel written by the Apostle John. For if he had, Eusebius would certainly have informed us of his testimony to it, as he does in the case of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. But not only is there not a word in Eusebius about any testimony of Papias to the Gospel of John, but on the contrary, as we saw above (p. 100 f.), the conclusion may rather be drawn from the passage quoted by Eusebius from the work of Papias that for Papias the Apostle John belonged to the generation of the Apostles which had long ago disappeared, and about whose discourses he was only able to obtain information through two intermediate links. It is not reconcilable with this that the Apostle John, as the tradition has it, taught, and wrote the Gospel, as late as the time of Trajan, in Asia Minor, the native home of Papias. That this tradition, which makes the aged Apostle John work at Ephesus as the honoured head of the Church of Asia Minor down to his peaceful death at a late period, was not known

to Papias, appears from the fact that Papias only names him sixth—next to last—among the Apostles whom he mentions, instead of first among them, as we should expect of a bishop in those parts, assuming the tradition to be true. Under these circumstances a statement preserved by the chronicler Georgios Hamartolos deserves careful attention, to the effect that in the second book of Papias' work there was an account of the martyr-death of the Apostle John at the hands of the Jews; a statement of which the importance is considerably enhanced by its having been discovered in another ancient source, the Codex Baroccianus of the seventh or eighth century.<sup>1</sup> On these various grounds we may consider it proved that Papias did not know the Apostle John as the aged teacher and Evangelist of Ephesus, and did not know the Fourth Gospel as an apostolic work—whether he knew it at all or not may be left an open question. The position is similar in regard to the earlier contemporary of Papias and Justin, the bishop Polycarp of Smyrna.

It has indeed been suggested that one passage of Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians (vii. 1) shows evidence, in its resemblance to 1 John iv. 2 f. and 2 John 7, that Polycarp was acquainted with the Johannine Epistles; and it has been sought to draw from that the conclusion that he also knew the Fourth Gospel—and, moreover, knew it as the work of his teacher the Apostle John. But that is a very hasty conclusion. In the first place, it is to be noticed that the phrase in Polycarp,

<sup>1</sup> According to the discovery communicated by De Boor in Gebhardt and Harnack's *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vol. ii. 170 ff., the correctness of which has not, so far as I know, been impugned.

*ad Phil.* vii. 1, "Everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an anti-christ," is not a word-for-word quotation either from 1 John iv. 2 or 2 John 7, but merely resembles them closely. It justifies the assertion of at most the possibility, by no means of the necessity, of dependence on the part of the writer of *ad Phil.* vii. 1 on the Johannine epistles; it is indeed also quite possible that in these words of Polycarp's letter we should see only one of the polemic or imprecatory formulæ referring to the Docetists which were current in Church circles at that time, similar to these which are found in considerable numbers in the Ignatian Letters.<sup>1</sup> But even assuming that these words of Polycarp really contain a reference to 2 John 7 (which is more likely than 1 John iv. 2 f.), all that could be inferred from this is that Polycarp knew the second Johannine epistle, not that he knew it as a work of the Apostle John, and not that he also knew the Gospel, and, least of all, that he knew this to be by John the Apostle. These conclusions drawn by our apologists are not merely without a syllable of foundation in Polycarp's letter, but the contents of the letter force any unprejudiced reader to the opposite conclusion. For whereas that letter is full of allusions to the Pauline and Ignatian letters, to 1 Peter and 1 Clement, it shows no trace of relationship with the Johannine theology. It exalts in chapter iii. "the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul," but never so much as mentions John, who, according to the Irenæan tradition, had been his teacher and had appointed him bishop; and the position of matters

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kreyenbühl, *Evangelium der Wahrheit*, p. 68 f., and Réville, *Le iv. Ev.*, p. 51.

in fact is, that if that tradition were correct, a letter which was so completely silent regarding John could not be considered genuine; and if the letter was really written by Polycarp, as we have no reason to doubt (*v. sup.*, vol. iii. p. 365 f.), it follows that the writer can have known nothing of the John of the later tradition, the Apostle and Evangelist who lived at Ephesus. This letter, therefore, affords strong confirmation of the foregoing criticism of the legends of Irenæus. And what applies to Polycarp applies equally to his friend Ignatius. The impression that the Ignatian letters showed dependence on the Johannine writings was only rendered possible by the bad habit of taking a general relationship of thought between two authors, such as is easily explained by the influence of the common *milieu* of their time, as a sufficient proof of the dependence of one of them upon the other. The truth is that in the whole of the genuine letters of Ignatius there is not a single phrase which points to dependence upon the Gospel or the Epistles of John.<sup>1</sup> But how could that be, if these writings had been known at the time of Ignatius? Where else could the combative bishop of Antioch have found such excellent weapons for his attack upon the Docetists as in the testimonies of the First Epistle (i. 1 f.) and of the Gospel from the prologue (i. 14) right inwards to the narratives of the resurrection (xx. 27, xxi. 5 ff.)? Would it be conceivable that he should never appeal to these testimonies,

<sup>1</sup> This is excellently argued by E. von der Goltz, *Ignatius von Antiochien*, pp. 118-144, who sums up the result of his investigation as follows: "In the case of Ignatius we must hold to the theory of *complete literary independence* but close mental and spiritual affinity" (p. 143). Cf. Réville, *Le iv. Ev.*, p. 72.



never even allude to them, if these writings had been known in his day, and, moreover, acknowledged as the work of the Apostle John? Besides, the letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians becomes, on the assumption of the correctness of the Irenæan tradition, an inexplicable enigma. Ignatius there apologises (chapter xii.) for venturing to write to a church which had been initiated into Christianity by the Apostle Paul, the blessed martyr, who made mention, moreover, of the Ephesians in every letter; but he never says a single word about the Apostle John, who, according to the tradition, had lived on in Ephesus into the time of Trajan, that is to say, close to Ignatius' own day, as the honoured head of the churches of Asia, and had died and was buried there! This silence of Ignatius, who in point of time and place stood so near the "John" of the tradition, and who would have had such urgent reason to appeal to him, would of itself suffice to discredit the tradition. But to this we have to add that this *argumentum e silentio* applies, not merely to the Ignatian letters, but to the whole of the literature of the first half of the second century. In the deutero-Pauline Pastoral Epistles, the first of which purports to give Timothy directions for the guidance of the church at Ephesus and for the combating of the false teachers there, we find no trace of any allusion to the many years' work of the Apostle John in that church. And the same is the case with the deutero-Pauline Epistle to the Ephesians. The First Epistle of Peter, which was written in Trajan's time to the churches of Asia, has, indeed, numerous points of contact with the Apocalypse, but nowhere shows any acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel, or with the position ascribed to the

Apostle John as chief shepherd of the churches of Asia Minor. In the Acts of the Apostles, written about the same time, under Trajan, John frequently appears in the first eight chapters as engaging in preaching and missionary work along with Peter (for the last time on the missionary journey to Samaria in viii. 14), but after that he is allowed to disappear from the stage of history without leaving a trace behind, and without giving any hint of his later work in Ephesus, although, had the writer known anything about it, there was an almost inevitable occasion for mentioning it in the discourse which in xx. 17 ff. he makes Paul deliver at Miletus to the Ephesian Elders, where he warns them of future false teachers (verses 29 ff.). The First Epistle of Clement, too, mentions the martyr-death of Peter and Paul in Rome, but of the death by boiling oil which according to later legend John is supposed to have suffered there, the Roman Clement knows as little as of his work in Ephesus. The Apostle who according to the later tradition had been the most famous authority of the church in Asia Minor, has become as obscure a figure for Clement of Rome as for the contemporary authors of Acts and the First Epistle of Peter and for those of the deutero-Pauline Epistles, and not less so for Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papias, the bishops of Antioch, Smyrna, and Hierapolis. The general result, then, is that the witnesses for the later Johannine tradition, which appears with such high pretensions in Irenæus, become more and more uncertain as we go back from him towards the middle of the second century; and from there to the beginning of the century they fall completely silent. But if that be so, the traditions

stand condemned in the eyes of all who can take an unprejudiced view of history, and all that remains is to explain its origin. This we shall arrive at by examining the internal evidence of the Johannine writings.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

### CHAPTER VI

#### INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE APOCALYPSE

THE author of the Apocalypse calls himself (i. 1, 9) "John, the servant of God, brother of the Christians and partaker with them in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus," but he never calls himself the Apostle of Jesus, and never makes the faintest allusion to the long years of work in the Ephesian church ascribed to him by the tradition; he never appeals to his apostolic commission to teach, received from the historical Jesus, nor to the teaching which he had heard from Jesus Himself, and never refers to any reminiscence of His earthly life, of which he had been a witness. No doubt he claims the authority of one who "bore witness of the Word of God and of the testimony of Jesus, even of all things that he saw" (i. 2), but this means "saw" in the spiritual transport (i. 10), and of the testimony he says in xix. 10, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The source of his authority is therefore the spiritual revelation of the *prophet*, not the historical revelation of the Apostle and disciple of the earthly Jesus. The Apostles he sees in xviii. 20 among the glorified spirits of the

former "witnesses unto blood," who are soon to triumph in the Divine judgment executed upon their enemies; their twelve names are to be inscribed upon the foundations of the New Jerusalem which comes down from heaven (xxi. 14); obviously, therefore, he does not reckon himself one of them. But for all that he is scarcely behind them; for in his possession of the prophetic spirit he knows that his words are trustworthy and true, for the God of the spirits of the prophets has sent His angel to show His servants that which will shortly come to pass, and it is he, John, who sees and hears this (xxii. 6 ff.). As the bearer of a spiritual revelation of this kind he knows himself to be a "servant of God" in a special sense, standing on the same footing with the angels, for when he would worship the angel of revelation, the latter prevents him with the words, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book; worship God" (xxii. 8 f., xix. 10). Those who ask how the Apocalyptist could have assumed such authority if he were not the Apostle John, forget that he was a prophet, and that in that period of early Christian enthusiasm the spiritual revelation of the prophet ranked as a Divine word of an authority at least equal to, if not higher than, the historical revelation of the Apostles. Later there was no doubt a change in this respect, but at the meeting-point of the first and second centuries the prevailing conviction of the Church exactly corresponded to what the Apocalyptist says in x. 7, "His mystery has God made known as glad tidings (*εὐηγγέλισεν*) to his servants the prophets." The prophetic word was then held to be absolutely the Word of God, the testimony

of Jesus, the very Gospel. Immediately behind the rank of the prophets came that of the ascetics, that is, of those who through continence or suffering (martyrdom) have stood forth as pattern Christians. That we can see from xiv. 1-5, where the 144,000 sealed persons of the Jewish Apocalyptic (vii. 3-8) are transformed into the first-fruits which have been purchased from among men for God and the Lamb, a company consisting of those who are virgin and have not defiled themselves with women, and who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and in whose mouth is found no lie, who are without blemish. That the prophet John belonged to this élite who distinguished themselves by their virgin purity and unfailing constancy in following Jesus, is in itself probable, and finds confirmation in the standing epithet attached to his name in tradition, "the virgin" (*παρθένος*). This high esteem for the ascetic life as a necessary condition for receiving the spiritual gifts of the prophet was in harmony with the universal view of the period, as we see, for example, in the case of Philip's "virgin daughters who did prophesy" (Acts xxi. 9; *v. sup.*, p. 103). It would thus appear that it was his two fold dignity as prophet and ascetic which made John, the author of the Apocalypse, so great an authority for the churches of Asia Minor, and surrounded his name with the halo which gave rise to the later legend.

To penetrate through the mists of legend to any certain knowledge regarding the person of the author is not possible. Whether he had really lived in the island of Patmos, where he professes to have received the revelation (i. 9); and if so, whether it was in consequence of a sentence of banishment imposed by

Domitian, or to escape the persecution; or by way of withdrawal into solitude for the purpose of spiritual meditation, are questions to which we do not know the answer, and to dispute about them is futile. It is equally impossible to know whether his home was in Ephesus, or elsewhere in Asia Minor, or even in Palestine. In favour of the first is the tradition of the residence of the Apostle John in Ephesus, which is most easily explained if John, the author of the Apocalypse, lived at Ephesus. In any case he was a Jew by birth, for he not only knows the Old Testament in the original, but is deeply versed in the apocalyptic literature of Judaism. And his Jewish culture is by no means disowned by his Christian faith. He is, indeed, far removed from the exclusive Judaism of the former opponents of Paul. He sees, for example, in the innumerable company of Gentile Christians of every race, his brethren, who are washed in the blood of the Lamb and raised to the dignity of kings and priests (vii. 9 ff., i. 5 f.); and though he does not mention the Apostle Paul, he is nevertheless far from repudiating him, as some interpreters have tried to make out on the basis of some misunderstood passages, such as ii. 2, 9, 14, 24 (on which see vol. iii. p. 410 ff.); he is familiar with the language of the Pauline Epistles, adopts many of their phrases (*e.g.* "in Christ"); and in particular he has made the Pauline doctrine of the atoning death of Christ the central point of his own doctrine of redemption. But, on the other hand, he is no more a disciple of Paul than he is an opponent. The Pauline doctrine that the believer in Christ in virtue of his belief possesses the Spirit of the Lord and thereby becomes the Son of God and is made certain of the love of the Father,

is unknown to him ; he calls God, indeed, the Father of Christ, but never our Father. God is for him, as in the Jewish view, the majestic Ruler of the world, the Judge seated on the heavenly throne, from whom requital, vengeance, and reward are to be expected. The angels surround the throne of God and are the messengers who bear His revelation, the ministers who execute His judgment. The religious relationship of man to God is essentially that of a servant to his master, the ruling motive is the fear of God (xi. 18, xiv. 7, xv. 4, xix. 5), which manifests itself in works of righteousness (*δικαιώματα*, xix. 8), in the faithful holding fast of the word of God and the confession of Christ even amid persecutions, in the service of brotherly love and in abstinence from heathen conduct such as unchastity and the eating of meats offered to idols: other legal demands the author will not lay upon his readers, as he expressly says in ii. 24. He is therefore no narrow-minded Jewish legalist, like the old opponents of Paul. But he holds fast to the Messianic hopes and the theocratic privilege of the Jewish people. He looks for a terrible judgment upon the heathen, in which all the innocent blood of the saints (Jews and Christians) which they have shed will be avenged. After that there will follow an earthly Messianic kingdom of a thousand years' duration, the rule over which will be shared by the martyrs, who will have been raised from the dead. The final decisive combat will consist in an attack upon "the beloved city" (Jerusalem) by the God-opposing world-powers, after whose defeat the New Jerusalem will descend from heaven. This reveals itself as the continuation in higher potency, the fulfilment, of the old Jewish theocracy by the



fact that on the twelve gates of the city there stand the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel (xxi. 12); and all the kings of the earth shall bring their glory (as tribute) into it (xxi. 24, 26). Even in the restored Paradise of the time of the end, the People as represented by the 144,000 who received the seal (vii. 3-8), retains its advantage over the Gentiles, to whom are given only the leaves of the tree of life (xxii. 2), whereas the fruits that were gathered twelve times yearly are obviously reserved for the theocratic people of the Twelve Tribes, which therefore retains, even in the eternal age, its privileged position as an aristocracy within the New Testament People of God. Of course John the prophet did not himself invent these eschatological conceptions, but took them over from the Jewish apocalyptists. But the very fact that he did take them over and incorporate them as his own belief into his imaginary picture of the final consummation shows clearly enough the definitely Jewish-Christian character of his religious system of thought. It is, certainly, no longer the narrow Jewish Christianity of the primitive community, and neither is it a simple development, in the direct line, of the early Christian belief, but it is the thoroughly characteristic Jewish Christianity which grew up on the soil of the Jewish-Christian Diaspora, under the influence of the Pauline Gospel, on the one hand, and of the teeming world of mythological and mystical ideas of contemporary Western Asian religious syncretism, on the other, quite independently of the tradition of the primitive community. A particularly characteristic mark of this is the picture of Christ in the Apocalypse, a "confused conglomerate of the

most diverse conceptions.”<sup>1</sup> Its basis is taken from the Jewish Messianic picture of the theocratic king, the victorious warrior, and terrible ruler of the heathen (*cf.* xix. 11–16 with Ps. ii., Isa. lxiii., Psalms of Solomon xvii). To this is added the heavenly Son of Man (i. 13, xiv. 14) of Daniel and Enoch; next, the Pauline Redeemer who loves us and has purchased us with His blood, the first-born from the dead (i. 5); further, metaphysical predicates which recall the Epistle to the Colossians, “the beginning of the creation of God” (iii. 14), “the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega” (xxi. 6, i. 17); once, again—in a passage of which the genuineness and the meaning are very problematical (xix. 13)—“the Word of God”; finally, the Son of the heavenly woman, who is persecuted by the dragon but overcomes the dragon (xii.), the slain Lamb and the victorious Lion of the tribe of Judah (v. 5 and 6), who has descended into Hades and yet is alive and has the keys of death and Hades (i. 18), the bright and morning star (xxii. 16). All these latter predicates are of mythical origin, being derived from that widely ramified and multiform group of myths which turn upon the struggle and victory of the divinity of light and life in conflict with the powers of darkness and death.<sup>2</sup> It is sufficiently obvious: this apocalyptic picture of Christ is a conglomerate of the most various elements, Jewish, Christian, and Pagan; that which counts for least in it is the Gospel tradition of the

<sup>1</sup> Bousset, *Kommentar zur Apokalypse*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> I will not here repeat the references for this, as they are given above (vol. iii.) at the relevant passages, in the analysis of the Apokalypse.

historical Jesus, the teacher of the Galilæan band of disciples.

Now, is it possible that the Hellenistic-Jewish prophet in whose soul dwelt such a picture of Christ as this, compounded of Jewish, Pauline, and mythical pagan elements, and wholly remote from the historical Jesus, can have been an Apostle of Jesus? Can he, indeed, ever have stood in any kind of personal relation to the earthly Jesus? I think this question answers itself for anyone who is convinced that the personal impression made by Jesus upon His disciples must have been much too powerful for His image in their souls ever to be obliterated and displaced by an image of an alien stamp, created by theological speculation or mythological fancy.

Having arrived at this result we have now to determine the relation of John the prophet to the Presbyter of the same name, the teacher of Papias and Polycarp. As we know really nothing further about this "Elder" except that he was the authority for the Chiliastic beliefs of Papias, Polycarp, and Irenæus, there is, so far, nothing whatever to prevent our identifying him with the author of the Apocalypse. But the assertion of Irenæus that the John who was the teacher of his teacher Polycarp had been also a direct witness of Jesus' life and teaching, would have to be dismissed as one of the many errors or inventions of Irenæus, since we hold it to be established that the author of the Apocalypse can never have been a personal disciple of Jesus, either in the narrower or in the wider sense. The question remains, however, whether, on the ground of the passage from Papias which has been quoted above (p. 100), where he couples together John the Presbyter and Aristion as "disciples of the

Lord," a personal relation of John the Presbyter to Jesus, as His disciple, must necessarily be assumed? If this question is answered in the affirmative—which I do not hold to be necessary, but certainly possible—we can no longer, for the reason given above, identify this Presbyter with John the Prophet. But since it is certainly only to the author of the Apocalypse that the whole Johannine legend attaches itself, the Presbyter, if he is not to be identified with the Prophet, must be left out of the Johannine question as an obscure figure having no significance for it. That would be no great pity, for it cannot be denied that the way in which latterly in Germany the Presbyter John and his associates have been stuffed out into historical figures, has led to the whole Johannine question being deflected into a side track from which there is no outlet. It seems to me, therefore, that the question whether John the author of the Apocalypse was also Papias' Presbyter may be left open as of subordinate importance. The main thing to be recognised is that the starting-point, the germinal cell, of the whole of the later Johannine legend lies in the personal and literary authority of the author of the Apocalypse, John the prophet and ascetic, a Hellenistic Jewish-Christian of Asia Minor, who had never been an Apostle or in any sense a disciple of Jesus.

The date of the composition of the Apocalypse is given by Irenæus (V. xxx. 3) as the end of the reign of Domitian. And here his statement is supported by internal evidence. It cannot in any case have been written much earlier; it is perhaps more likely to have been written a little, but not very much, later. The opinion, formerly widely current, that

the Apocalypse was written immediately after Nero's death in the summer of the year 68 A.D., based itself on xi. 1 f., xiii. 3, and xvii. 10. The first of these passages is certainly derived from a period prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last from the reign of the sixth Roman Emperor, who was mistakenly assumed to be the short-lived Galba, whereas in reality Vespasian is meant. But these passages can no longer be relied on to prove the point, since it has been recognised that the Christian apocalyptist has incorporated into his work an earlier, and in fact a Jewish Apocalypse, as he himself unmistakably indicates in x. 9 ff. To this Jewish Apocalypse belong, as we saw above, chapters xi.–xiii. (xiv.) and xvii.–xviii. (xix.). Its origin is probably to be put as far back as the time of the Emperor Gaius Caligula (*circa* 40 A.D.), who by commanding the worship of the Imperial images and by planning the profanation of the Temple at Jerusalem, threw the Jews into a state of the greatest excitement, so that they saw in him a second Antiochus Epiphanes, and adapted from the Apocalypse of Daniel, which was directed against the latter, similar prophecies against the Roman Empire. The Jewish Apocalypse, dating from that period, subsequently, after the destruction of Jerusalem, received an extension, also probably at the hands of a Jew, who interpolated (in xiii., and especially xvii.) into the older work the expectation of the return of Nero with the Parthian hordes for a campaign of vengeance against Rome, an expectation which under Vespasian (69–79) was arousing great excitement among the peoples of the Eastern half of the Empire. In this extended form the Jewish Apocalypse came into the hands of John the Prophet,

and he incorporated it into his work. In doing so, however, he re-cast the unfulfilled prophecy of Nero's campaign against Rome at the head of the Parthian princes, giving it, by means of additions, the form that Nero would return, not from the East but from the Abyss (of hell) to make war, not against Rome but against Christ and His Church (*cf.* vol. iii. p. 461 f.). This re-casting of the material obviously implies a later period in which the older form of the Nero legend had become impossible; that is to say, at the earliest, the last decade of the first century.

But there are other reasons also which make the assumption of an earlier date for the origin of the Johannine Apocalypse impossible. It was written, as we said, just at the time when a severe and general persecution of Christianity was setting in; and there never was such a persecution until the end of the reign of Domitian. For the slaying of the Christians under Nero was not an official persecution, but an arbitrary act of tyrannical caprice, the effects of which were confined to the city of Rome, and under his successors the Christians were not molested by the Roman government until Domitian, in the last two years of his reign (from 95 onward), began to inflict judicial penalties upon them in consequence of their refusal to take part in the worship of the Emperor which he had expressly commanded. The practice begun by him was, under his second successor Trajan (98-117), legally regulated, and was carried out by the Roman provincial governors. (This is probably what is referred to in the interpretation—due to the final redactor—of the “ten kings” who wage war against Christ and His Church, in xvii. 12-14.) Thus the indications so far noticed suggest that the composition of

the Apocalypse is to be placed at the beginning of the reign of Trajan. And the inner circumstances of the churches implied in the letters of the first three chapters point in the same direction; especially the appearance of the false teachers. We have seen above that by the Nicolaitans or Balaamites (the names are synonymous, like Naasenes and Ophites) we are to understand an antinomian libertine sect of Jewish-syncretistic Gnostics, of the same order as the Simonians and Cainites. These Gnostic parties did not take their origin from the Christian churches but from the Jewish-Syrian religious syncretism, and have therefore no historical connection whatever with Paul and Paulinism. But because they had in common with the Gentile Christians the opposition to orthodox legal Judaism, it is easily intelligible that they tried to get into touch with them and to propagate their radical antinomianism in the churches. Now the warnings in the letters to the Seven Churches point to the beginning of this movement. But this can hardly fall earlier than the end of the first century, for we know from a statement of Hegesippus (Euseb., *H.E.*, III. xxxii. 6 f.) that down to Trajan's time the Church continued in peace and purity, and that it was only then, when the whole generation of the Apostles had disappeared, that the false teachers attempted to oppose the preaching of the truth with their impious error and falsely-vaunted Gnosis. Thus from this point of view also the indications are in favour of placing the composition of the Apocalypse in the beginning of Trajan's reign, about the year 100 A.D., or a very little later.<sup>1</sup> To bring it much

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bousset, *Komm.*, p. 163: "The Apocalypse was written at the earliest at the end of the reign of Domitian, and for the lower

further down is not admissible, because both the persecution of Christians by the Roman government and the danger to the churches caused by the appearance of false teachers seem to be just in their beginnings in the time of the author of the Apocalypse. The polemic against the false teachers in the letters to the churches in Apoc. ii. and iii. is directed only against a crude naturalistic libertinism such as was practised among the earliest Jewish-Syrian Gnostics. Of false Christological dogma such as is combated in the Ignatian and Johannine Epistles there is as yet no mention; this heresy, which only began with the Christian Gnostics, first appeared, according to Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, VII. xvii. 106) under Hadrian. Therefore the earlier and cruder form of false doctrine which is combated in the Nicolaitans of the Apocalypse must fall in the time of Trajan. With this agrees the statement of Irenæus (III. xi. 1), according to which the Nicolaitans appeared "much earlier" than Cerinthus, who is combated in the Gospel and the Epistles of John. For in this case the Apocalypse, which combats the Nicolaitans as a new phenomenon, must have been written several decades earlier than the Gospel and Epistles; and this brings us once more to the beginning of the second century as the time when the Apocalypse arose. Finally, a further reason for abiding by this conclusion is that the Apocalypse is probably used in 1 Peter and 1 Clement. As these two Epistles were probably written, at latest, in the second decade of the second century, the Apocalypse must, on this ground also, date from the first decade of the century at the latest.

limit we cannot go much beyond the early part of the reign of Trajan."



## THE ORIGIN OF THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

### CHAPTER VII

#### INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE GOSPEL

THE aim of the Fourth Gospel, according to its own account (xx. 30 f.) is not a historical representation of the life of Jesus of such a kind that completeness could be looked for from it. This, in fact, is definitely disavowed. Its aim is religious and dogmatic. It designs to bring the reader to the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, in order that, through belief in this name, he may have eternal life. By this "Son of God" the author understands not only the theocratic Messiah but the Divine Logos, who, according to the prologue, was from the beginning the Life and Light of the world and in Jesus became flesh, appeared as man. Of this Divine nature and pre-mundane existence the primitive Church knew nothing, and the whole of the earlier Gospel tradition, on which the belief of the Church had hitherto rested, contained no trace of it. On the other hand, the Alexandrian religious philosopher Philo had spoken of the Divine Logos as the mediator of the revelation of God in the world, and in the theories of the Gnostics the Logos and the only-begotten

Son, as well as other Divine intermediate beings, played an important part. But of an incarnation of the Logos Philo knew nothing; and while the Christian Gnostics brought the Logos into closer connection with the Gospel history, they did not think, either, of a real incarnation of the Logos. Some of them thought of the appearance of the Logos in Jesus as a mere illusion, and thus simply abolished the reality of the Gospel history; others brought the Logos into a merely outward and temporary relationship with the man Jesus. At all events the emphasis was laid upon the Divine nature, which so little entered into the human that the historical Jesus seemed to lose all significance for the faith of the Church. The serious danger to the Church's faith which this involved was recognised by its teachers from the first. We have seen with what energy men like Ignatius and Polycarp insisted that the Son of God had come in the flesh, had really been born and suffered and died, that God had revealed Himself in Jesus as man, with a variety of similar formulas. These formulas stated rather than solved a problem. There were two conceptions which held their ground side by side in the Christianity of the time—the Gnostic idealistic conception, which started from above, from the Divine side, and the traditional realistic conception, which started from the man of the Gospel tradition; the problem was to combine these two in the inner unity of the faith-view of the God-man. And just this was the problem which the author of the Fourth Gospel set himself to solve. He wished to establish the assertion of the Church teachers that God had revealed Himself in Jesus in human form, by taking the thesis that the Divine

Logos was incarnated in Jesus and making it the theme of a historical narrative which should show in detail that in the Jesus of the Gospel history the glory of the only-begotten Son, of the Divine Logos, had really dwelt, and had become an object of perception, of actual experience on the part of believers. He intended, therefore, in all seriousness to narrate history, and not, like the Gnostics, to offer abstract theories or fantastic myths about transcendental events, but of course *his historical narrative was wholly subordinated to his theological thesis of the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus*. Whatever suited this purpose he took from the varied material of written and unwritten, Church and apocryphal tradition (the two were not at that period very strictly distinguished), and worked it up in a fashion calculated to serve his purpose. This method of narrating events in the interest of religious edification had long been in use in the Jewish Haggada (legend). The feature of it which is so foreign to our sympathies, the untrammelled freedom and indifference to actual fact, was entirely natural in an age when the feeling for reality was as slight as the enthusiasm of faith and speculation were great. In this respect, indeed, the distinction between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels, in which the historical material has after all been much influenced by religious motives, is not a distinction of kind, but, in spite of the wide divergence, at bottom only one of degree. In them it is the simple belief of the primitive Church in the Messiahship of the man Jesus which has in its measure idealised the narrative, but not so far as to prevent the underlying history from being still quite recognisable; here it is

the theological doctrine of the incarnation of the Divine Logos in Jesus which makes the history into a didactic poem, soaring so high above the ground of reality that from it nothing even approximately like the history of Jesus can be extracted.

A comparative survey of the principal differences will show this clearly. The scene of Jesus' ministry is in the Synoptists Galilee, and only in the last days before His death, Jerusalem; in the Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, it is chiefly Judæa and Jerusalem; only in a few episodes of the first half is it Galilee. The length of His ministry is there one year; here, on the contrary, where three Passovers are mentioned,<sup>1</sup> it is from two to three years. In matters of detail, too, the dating is often different. The cleansing of the Temple is transferred from the end of Jesus' ministry to the beginning, thus losing its decisive significance for the historical progress of events; the anointing at Bethany takes place six days before the Passover, in the Synoptists only two days; the Last Supper and the day of the crucifixion are each moved back a day, so that in John Jesus dies on the day (14th Nisan) on which, according to the Synoptists, He ate the Passover with His disciples. Then again, in John the material is chosen with a special purpose. The miracles are reduced to the sacred number seven, and among them cures of possessed persons, which in the Synoptists are the most

<sup>1</sup> At least according to the canonical text. If the mention of the Passover in vi. 4 is a gloss, as is at least possible, since Irenæus (II. xxii. 3) and Origen (*In Ioann.*, xiii. 39) seem to know nothing of it, then in John also the public ministry of Jesus would only extend over a full year, from the Passover of ii. 23 to the Passover of xi. 55. Cf. Holtzman, *Einleitung*, p. 429.

frequent of all, are utterly lacking. On the other hand, four new miracles are narrated which go far beyond those of the Synoptists in their miraculous character: the changing of water into wine at Cana, the cure at the pool of Bethesda of the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, the cure of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus, who was already a prey to corruption. If the earlier Evangelists had known anything of these amazing miracles, is it possible that they would not have mentioned them? But if they were unknown to the earlier tradition, how could they have come to the knowledge of the later Evangelist? That in itself is a sufficient reason for holding these Johannine miracles to be not history but ideal allegories. Besides this, many detailed traits of the Synoptic tradition are wanting in John, and are replaced by others of a different character, which have no support elsewhere and are of little inherent probability, but can easily be explained as designed to illustrate ideas. There is no mention of the institution of the Lord's Supper, in place of which John gives the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, which is a dramatisation of the Lucan parable about the master waiting on his servant (Luke xxii. 27). There is no mention of the agony in Gethsemane; this evidence of human weakness gives place to an evidence of His Divine exaltation—at Jesus' words the cohort of His enemies falls to the ground (frequent parallels in the apocryphal Acts). The trial before Caiaphas is omitted, its place being taken by the trial before Annas, who was not the officiating high priest. The Messianic confession before the Jewish tribunal is absent, and is replaced by a confession that he is the King of Truth, offered

to the heathen sceptic. There is no mention of Simon of Cyrene's bearing the cross, which the Synoptists agree in recording—the Basilideans had represented Simon as substituted for Jesus at the crucifixion, and the incident is therefore suppressed by the anti-Gnostic Evangelist. The Synoptic sayings from the cross are omitted, and three new ones take their place. The nature-miracles at the death of Jesus are omitted, and instead appears the new and theologically significant miracle of the outflowing of blood and water. A point which is characteristic of John's method of writing history under the guidance of ideal motives is the frequent occurrence of triads of events: three times does the Baptist come forward to bear witness to Christ, three times does Jesus journey to Galilee, and three times to Judæa; three miracle stories fall in the Galilean period, and three in the Judæan; three Passovers are mentioned, and three other feasts; the story of Lazarus extends over three days; Jesus is three times condemned; He speaks three times from the cross; He appears three times to His disciples after the resurrection.

Not less noticeable is the peculiarity of the Johannine discourses as compared with those of the Synoptic Gospels, whether as regards form or content. The latter contain popular sayings and parables about the Kingdom of God and the conduct of men in various relationships; they are evoked by natural occasions, and are excellently adapted to the needs and understanding of the hearers, and make the impression of being true to life. The Johannine discourses, on the other hand, move in lofty regions of dogmatic argument, which lie far outside the understanding of the hearers. Their content is always

concerned with the Person of Christ Himself, His heavenly origin, His unique relation to God, His work in the world, and His rejection by the world. Instead of the apocalyptic Parousia expectation, we have the coming of Christ in the Spirit and the mansions in the Father's house; that is to say, religious mysticism in this world, and immortality in the other, together making up the Hellenistic substitute for the realistic Early Christian hope of the coming of the earthly Messianic Kingdom. It is noteworthy, too, that the thoughts are the same in form and content, whether they are expressed by Christ or by the Baptist or by the Evangelist himself—a proof that these Johannine discourses are not derived from tradition (indeed, how would it have been possible for tradition to preserve such long and elaborate discourses?), but spring from the theological reflection of the author.

The central point, and at the same time the explanation, of all these differences between the Synoptic and Johannine Gospels lies in the difference of the point of view in the two cases regarding the Person of Christ. In the former, especially in Mark and Luke, Jesus, for all his special endowment with the Spirit, is yet essentially a man who has a human history, who stands in mutual relations with His environment, and even grows and matures thereby, who by experience of the belief of some and the opposition of others gradually comes to the consciousness of His vocation. In John, on the other hand, Jesus is from the first the Son of God, for whom no development is possible, the Logos who has come from above and appeared in the flesh, whose earlier history is of a heavenly pre-existence and not of an

earthly childhood, to whom human growth and advance in knowledge is foreign, who from the beginning knows all things, can foretell all things, and wields the powers of omnipotence. "This picture of Christ scarcely corresponds at all to that which is requisite in a human being; it contradicts our essential conception of human nature, of its creaturely restriction, its gradual growth, its learning and striving; it combines in an unthinkable fashion Divine majesty and human limitation; for, not to speak of anything else, who can reconcile these contradictions—to journey from place to place and be wearied, and yet alongside of that, to disappear at will; to be hungry and thirsty and yet create out of nothing food and drink; to suffer persecution and nevertheless to die only by His own will, and again to be able by His own will to arise from the dead? And yet the reality of history with its harsh defiance of the ideal often breaks through. This Christ knows from the beginning what is in a man, and yet chose Judas to be an Apostle; He knows of His own knowledge the death of Lazarus, and yet only hears of his illness by messenger; He is exalted above every attack, and yet is persecuted, taken, bound and slain" (Keim). And just as Jesus Himself is, in John, a frigid, superhuman figure, admitting of no development, so the men about Him are frigid personifications of abstract ideas; believers who are of God, unbelievers who are from the devil. The dialogues between Jesus and the Jews show nothing of the educative wisdom and gentleness of the popular teacher of the Synoptic narrative, but with unnatural harshness He rejects the Jews as men from the beginning obstinately hardened; while they, on their part, consistently misunderstood Him. "Such dia-



logues could not be held by real men, but only by personified abstractions: the Logos on the one side, the darkness of the world on the other." Only in His relations with His disciples does the gentle and winning aspect of the Saviour's personality appear, especially in the parting discourses, the mystical language of which, however, for all its intimate tenderness and depth, is nevertheless far remote from the naïve simplicity of His manner of speech in the Synoptic Gospels.

That in all these differences the greater historical probability is on the side of the Synoptists is self-evident, and has indeed always at bottom been practically recognised by the Church, since its conception of the Gospel history follows in essentials the Synoptic and not the Johannine scheme. Even Justin Martyr in his day sketched the course of the life of Jesus wholly according to the Synoptists, and said of Jesus' utterances that they were "short and terse, for He did not speak like a Sophist," which sounds almost like a protest against the dialectical discourses of Christ in John. The peculiarities of the Johannine narrative do not therefore rest on another and better tradition, but are caused by the subordination of the traditional material to the dogmatic idea of the nature of Christ as the Divine Logos made flesh. It has sometimes been said that the Logos idea cannot dominate the whole Gospel, because it only occurs in the prologue and not in the discourses of Jesus. But that is simply to be explained by the fact that the author was "tactful enough not violently to force his philosophic technical term upon the history, though he delicately hinted at it there." It is only to be understood as the expression of the

author's speculative theology, "when his Christ, because He is the Logos, radiates a purely Divine glory, and discourses only of Himself, His pre-mundane existence and equality with God; when He, from the very first, knows all things, foretells all things, can do all things; when as the Logos, superior to all earthly necessities, He is not born, not baptized, does not struggle, does not suffer, stands high above Moses and John and His whole nation; when, finally, He is constantly attended, on the one hand, by a faith which, on first beholding Him, cries out, 'the Christ the Son of God,' and on the other, by the misunderstanding and unbelief of a whole nation, in which is manifested the darkness of the world" (Keim). It is the presuppositions of the Pauline theology, with their development in Gnosticism, that explain, in particular, the violently anti-Jewish attitude of the Johannine Gospel, which is quite foreign to the Synoptic picture of Christ. There Jesus declares the Mosaic law to be of inviolable authority, and forbids His disciples to go to Gentiles and Samaritans (Matt. v. 17 ff.; xxiii. 3, 23; x. 5); here he speaks of "the Law of the Jews" as of something which for Him is obsolete and without significance, and describes the Jews as children of the devil, who mistakenly suppose that they have eternal life in Moses, whereas He sees among the Samaritans and Gentiles the ripe harvest field into which he sends forth his labourers (iv. 35, 21; v. 39, viii. 41 ff., xii. 20 ff., xv. 25).

If this representation were historically correct, the hard struggle which Paul had to make for the freedom of the Gentile Christians from the Law would be wholly unintelligible, because the question of the Law

would have been already settled by Christ Himself in the most conclusive fashion. Accordingly, the history of the whole Apostolic period, as evidenced by the Pauline epistles, is a proof that the anti-Jewish and supra-Jewish Christ of the Johannine Gospel does not belong to history, but is carried back from the developed consciousness of the Church of the second century into the life of Jesus.

But how is it conceivable that an anti-Jewish Gospel such as this could have been written by the same Apostle John who, as late as the Apostolic Council, still belonged, according to Gal. ii. 6-9, to those legalist Jewish Christians who confined their missionary efforts to Israel, because they were unable to cross the dividing barrier of the Law? That this legalist Jewish Christian should in his old age have changed into an anti-Judaist, an apostle of freedom and philosophic mystic, outrivalling even Paul, is so preposterous an idea that it hardly admits of serious discussion from the historical point of view. And further, how is it possible that an eye-witness of the Gospel history could have so completely forgotten his own experiences as to take his material at second hand from the non-apostolic Evangelists Mark and Luke? and that when he diverges from them, so far from correcting them by giving something historically more correct, he goes far beyond them in the tendency towards the unhistorical, in the shape of ideal allegories? How could an Apostle have narrated as historical facts the miracle of Cana, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus, which never really happened, but owe their origin to purely ideal motives? Or how could one who had heard with his own ears the popular teach-

ing of Jesus have so completely forgotten this as to replace it by discourses of a dogmatic character, for which Paul, Philo, and Gnosticism contribute the ideas, and which are wholly concerned with the problems which confronted apologetic and polemic theology in the second century? The impossibility of holding these discourses to be truly historical is now generally recognised; and the defenders of the Apostolic authorship have recourse to the expedient of explaining them as partly later interpolations, partly as at least having undergone a strongly subjective re-casting. But it is just as impossible to make the narratives genuine and the discourses spurious as it is to make the discourses genuine and the narratives spurious, for in the Johannine Gospel the two always belong together as text and illustration. The Fourth Gospel is, in fact, when all is said and done—this is a quite unshakable conclusion—so entirely of one piece that it must either be held to be genuine as a whole, or if that is shown to be impossible, spurious as a whole. And as for the supposed subjective re-casting of the discourses by the Evangelist, this would have to be thought of as so thoroughgoing that of the assumed reminiscences of the Apostle almost nothing would remain; and that this would have been possible for a personal disciple of Jesus appears from every point of view, whether psychological or moral, extremely improbable. “Under all the circumstances, the common consciousness of the century succeeding the death of Jesus, rising to meet the growing tasks of the time, provides a more appropriate crucible in which the primitive Christian historical materials and such thought-forms might undergo a so complete new

birth, than the individual consciousness of the disciple John when approaching the hundredth year of his age" (Holtzmann).

This holds, not only against the traditional ascription of the authorship to the Apostle John, but also against the latterly much-favoured hypothesis of the authorship of the Presbyter John, if he is supposed to be a personal disciple of Jesus. If he was not that, he may indeed, as the authority for the Chiliasm of Papias, quite well have been the author of the Johannine Apocalypse; but for that very reason he cannot have been the author of the Fourth Gospel. That the author of the Jewish-Christian and Chiliastic Apocalypse certainly cannot have been the author of the anti-Jewish, anti-Chiliastic Gospel, is a conclusion which long ago dawned on the Alexandrian Dionysius (Euseb., *H.E.*, VII. xxv.), and which still remains unshaken: all the modern attempts to distinguish sources in the Apocalypse cannot alter that. However much material the author may have drawn from Jewish sources, he has, after all, adopted it as his own and represented it in his work, not as something foreign to him, but as his own conviction; and this conviction of his is essentially the primitive Christian Messianic-Chiliastic belief, and is therefore as remote as possible from the beliefs of the Evangelist. Again, the style of thought and language in the two cases is wholly different. In the Apocalypse we have the language of an emotional temperament roused to passionate feeling and of a bold but unregulated and inartistic imagination, and the style is extremely incorrect, Hebraic rather than Greek; in the Gospel we have a smoothly flowing prose in a comparatively correct style with only a faintly Hebraic colouring,

in the broad stream of which dialectic arguments are combined with mystical images and allegories into a stately work of art; the fierce flame of apocalyptic enthusiasm is toned down into the mild and steady illumination of a Hellenistic Christian's ideal world. That certainly warrants us in assigning a different author and a later time of composition. We have also to notice that even in Church tradition the Apocalypse is declared thirty years before the Gospel to be a work of the Apostle John; and how could that be if both were written by the same author at about the same time? But since we have seen above that the Apocalypse was not written by the Apostle, but by John the prophet and ascetic, about 100 A.D., there cannot in the case of the Gospel, which is of considerably later date, be any question of the Apostle's being the author. The explanation of the way in which this attribution arose in the Early Church must be looked for in the Apocalypse, from which the suggestion of the Johannine legend is derived.

The author of the Fourth Gospel does not indeed anywhere profess to be the Apostle John; on the contrary, he distinguishes himself from the "beloved disciple," by whom he certainly means the Apostle John, but at the same time he seeks to put his Gospel under the latter's authority, and claims for himself some kind of not clearly defined solidarity with him. That appears from the two passages, i. 14 and xix. 35. When he says in the former "we beheld His glory" (that of the incarnate Logos), our first impression is that he who so speaks was himself one of the eye-witnesses and personal disciples of Jesus. But in the second passage he says: "He that

hath seen it [the lance-thrust and the outflow of blood and water] has testified to it, and we know that his testimony is true, and *that man* knoweth that he speaketh true, that ye also may believe." Here he obviously appeals to the testimony of the eye-witness as that of a third person, who is not himself, but only his authority. This eye-witness cannot have been anyone else than the beloved disciple, whom, in xix. 26, he represents as the only one at the cross. The question now arises, How does the Evangelist arrive at this mysterious figure of the "beloved disciple" to whom he never gives a name but to whom he nevertheless repeatedly assigns a prominent place, and to whom, in particular, he appeals as the witness of the Lord's death? The answer is to be found in *Leucian Acts of John*, where the Apostle John is similarly the beloved disciple, but where the reason of this pre-eminence, which in the Gospel remains obscure, is clearly and explicitly given; it is because of his virgin chastity that the Lord chooses John as his favourite and confidant above all the other disciples. This may be seen in the parting prayer given above (iii. 183 f.), where the Apostle, when about to die, commends his soul to the Lord, who up to that hour had kept him pure and unstained by woman, who in his youth had forbidden him to marry because He Himself needed him, who made him know that to look upon a woman was something hateful, and preserved him from the foul frenzy of the flesh, who put into his soul no other love than that for Jesus alone, and had kept his love to Him immaculate, his walk unblemished, who gave him undoubting faith and pure knowledge concerning Jesus. The beloved disciple is here also

the confidant to whom alone it is vouchsafed to receive the true knowledge concerning the nature of the Lord. The *Acts of John* narrate that during the crucifixion of Jesus John had fled to the Mount of Olives and the Lord appeared to him there in a luminous shape and said to him, "It is only for the multitude down there in Jerusalem that I am being crucified, and smitten with lances and reeds, and given vinegar and gall to drink. But to thee I am speaking, and do thou give heed to what I say. I put it into thy mind to come to this mountain that thou mightest hear what the disciple of the Lord has to learn and the man of God" (then follows his instruction in the mystery of the cross of light). "Therefore trouble not thyself about the many, and despise those who stand outside of the mystery, for thou (alone) shalt know me that I am wholly with the Father and the Father with me. I have not really suffered anything of that which they will say of me, and on the other hand I have suffered what they do not say. What that is I show thee, for I know thou wilt understand it, because thou art related to me." Here, therefore, the beloved disciple who is chosen on account of his asceticism is made the bearer of a higher knowledge, of a spiritual Gospel, which is contrasted with the sensuous seeming-knowledge of the multitude as the essential truth. The origin of this Gnostic legend, which Leucius doubtless did not himself invent, but found ready to his hand and merely worked up, is not difficult to conjecture when we remember that in the Apocalypse, John, the prophet and ascetic, identified the true testimony of Jesus with the Spirit of Prophecy, and represented the prophets as the confidants of



God, to whom He has made known the secret of His counsel as a Gospel (glad tidings), Apoc. xix. 10, x. 7. This prophet and ascetic John, who represents himself as a confidant of the Divine mystery and a possessor of the testimony of the Spirit of Jesus, was identified by the Gnostics with the prophet of the same name, in order that they might put into his mouth, in this character, their esoteric knowledge about the nature of Christ as a special revelation directly communicated by Christ, and so might turn to account in the interests of their Gnostic Christology the widespread authority possessed by the author of the Apocalypse. It was thus first in Gnostic circles that the Apostle John had ascribed to him the attributes of "the virgin" and the "possessor of the Spirit" *par excellence*, of the confidant and favourite disciple of Jesus. Now, if the Church teacher desired to overthrow the docetic error of these Gnostics and to mediate between the spiritual exaltation of their picture of Christ and the historical tradition of the Church, there was scarcely any other way open to him than that which we have seen taken by the author of the Fourth Gospel; he had to wrest from the heretical Gnostics the authority of their Apostle-Prophet John by making this very John the authority for his own Church-Gnostic Gospel. That was no doubt a hazardous undertaking which could only succeed if it was carried out with prudence and discretion. The Prophet-Apostle and favourite disciple whom he took from the opposite camp was, to begin with, for the Church still an unknown quantity, and must not therefore be crudely thrust upon it, but only so suggested by veiled hints that the readers might be led to divine him as the

authority and guarantor who stood behind this new Gospel. Hence the curious mystification which the author practises in regard to his "beloved disciple." He never directly names him; the readers must divine who he is. He never says, either, why he is the "beloved disciple"; that, the Gnostics may know, but there is no need for the Church to know, for that would be only too likely to remind its members of the problematical origin of this new ecclesiastical authority. The Evangelist is also silent as regards the ways and means by which the testimony of this "beloved disciple" has become known to him; it is indeed the Spirit that testifies (1 John v. 6), and this Spirit of truth is in him, the Evangelist, himself, just as much as in the Apostle John. Hence the quasi-identification of himself with his authority, whose testimony is in turn confirmed by himself (xix. 35), and with whose spiritual eyes he himself has also seen the Divine manifested in the appearance of the Lord (i. 14). If the heretical Gnostics had represented their new wisdom as directly proclaimed by the Apostle-Prophet of their own creation, the Church Gnostic did not dare to proceed in so undisguised a fashion—the only result would have been to alarm the Church which he was seeking to win over to his higher conception of the spiritual Gospel. What he could do was, in virtue of his own possession of the Spirit, to place himself in such a close relation of solidarity with his spiritual witness that the distinction of the two should be obscured for the consciousness of the reader, as it was for that of the writer.

This is the basis on which it is to be explained how our Evangelist came, in direct contradiction to

the earlier tradition, to make the Apostle John remain at the cross on Golgotha, receive the last testament of the dying Lord, and witness the miracle of the blood and water. This account does not rest on a special tradition: it is simply the Church transformation of the Gnostic legend of the appearance of the Lord with the cross of light upon the Mount of Olives, and of the revelation there given to the Apostle John, conveying to him the esoteric knowledge of the docetic character of His sufferings at Jerusalem. It is true, the Church Evangelist designs to say, that John alone was with the Lord at the time of His death, but not with his "Light-form" on the Mount of Olives, but with Him as corporeally crucified on Golgotha: it is true that he here received the legacy of his Lord, not consisting, however, in an esoteric knowledge to be communicated to the narrow circle of the initiate, but in the task of caring for the Church as a whole, the ideal Mother of the Lord; it is true that he was the faithful witness of the sufferings of the Lord, testifying, however, not that they were unreal sufferings, but that they were corporeal sufferings unto death, which became for His people the source of mystical blessings. It is probable that in a similar way other portions of the material peculiar to John (*e.g.*, the miracle of Cana or the raising of Lazarus) might find their explanation in Gnostic parallels, if we knew the corresponding Gnostic legends. And there are two other cases in which a polemical allusion of the kind may be suspected. Our Evangelist has not only passed over in silence the incident of Simon of Cyrene bearing the cross, which the evangelical tradition unanimously records, but has definitely excluded it by the express

statement that Jesus bore His own cross (xix. 17). The motive of this omission may be guessed when we remember that the Basilideans represented Simon of Cyrene as having been crucified in the place of Jesus. In order to cut the ground from beneath this Gnostic fable of Jesus' "double" and substitute at the crucifixion, the Evangelist wished to strike out Simon of Cyrene altogether from the Gospel history. Further, it is known that the Gnostics regarded the baptism of Jesus as the epiphany of the Divine Christ-Spirit, and the Basilideans therefore celebrated as the day of His baptism the 15th or 11th of the month Tybi, by holding a feast on the eve (Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, I. xxi. 146). This may have been the Evangelist's motive, or one of his motives, for passing over in silence the baptism of Jesus and only making John the Baptist testify in a general way, without reference to the particular date and occasion, that he had seen the Spirit descending and abiding on Jesus, and had thus recognised that He was the Son of God and would baptize with the Holy Spirit (i. 32 ff.). In this passage, too, the repeated emphasis on the Spirit's *abiding* upon Jesus is a direct denial of the Basilidean and Cerinthian tenet that the Spirit which descended upon Jesus at His baptism left Him again before His Passion and flew back to the heavenly Pleroma. Other references in the Gospel to this form of Gnosticism have been pointed out above (p. 12 f.) in the analysis of the prologue. We noticed, however, there, and we shall also have occasion to see more fully later on, that the relation of John the Evangelist (and of the author of the Epistles) to the Gnosticism of the time was not a purely polemical one, but that he also adopted their terms

and ideas, though no doubt with certain modifications. Thence came the terms Logos, Only-begotten, and Pleroma, the cosmico-ethical antithesis of Light and Darkness, especially the doctrine of the two classes of men, the children of God and the children of the devil, a doctrine which had first been introduced by Saturninus, and played an important rôle in the Basilidean Gnosis. There is just one point more which I should like to indicate in this connection. The question which the disciples ask about the man born blind (ix. 1), "Who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he has been born blind?" obviously implies the conception of a possible incurring of guilt in a former existence, and, consequently, the doctrine of pre-existence and transmigration of souls. It is the only passage of the New Testament where this conception appears, and, so far as I know, it is found nowhere else in patristic literature, except that Clement of Alexandria and Origen mention it as a doctrine of the Basilideans (*v. sup.*, iii. 149). It is therefore natural to conjecture that in ix. 1 our Evangelist has put into the mouth of the disciples a question implying the transmigration doctrine of the Basilideans for the purpose of repudiating it from the standpoint of the Church.

From all this, it seems to me, there results a cogent demonstration that the Fourth Gospel stands in a direct relation, both positive and negative, to the Gnosticism of the Hadrianic period, as it was elaborated in the schools of Saturninus, Basilides, and Cerinthus, and popularised in the Gnostic romance known as the *Acts of John*. Whether the latter was written earlier or later than the Gospel we do not, indeed, know, but it does not matter much, for in

any case this, at least, is certain, viz. that the author of this romance knew neither the Gospel nor the First Epistle of John.<sup>1</sup> It is quite obvious that the vigorous attack on his docetic Christology embodied in the Johannine writings simply did not exist for him. He offers his Christology, docetic as it is and verging on Monarchianism, with the naïve innocence of one who is not attacking the Church as a heretic, but desires to edify it by his deeper knowledge, and especially, by his ideal picture of the ascetic "beloved disciple," to encourage the Church to emulate this severe morality. That he did not take this figure from the Gospel of John is clear to anyone who has eyes to see, for while in the latter it is completely unexplained and enigmatic, in the *Acts of John* it is clearly and completely explained; for it is the living embodiment of the fundamental view of Christianity held by the ascetic Gnostics—the view which prevails throughout the work. Thus only one of two possibilities remains open. Either the Evangelist took his "beloved disciple" directly from the Leucian *Acts*, which in that case were written before the Gospel,<sup>2</sup> or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. Corssen, *Monarchianische Prologe zu den 4 Evangelien*, in Gebhardt and Harnack's *Texte und Untersuchungen*, xv., Heft I. It was here, so far as I am aware, that the *Acts of John* were first indicated as containing the key of the Johannine problem. Corssen's view is shared, so far as regards the independence of the *Acts of John* in relation to the Gospel, by Hilgenfeld in his essay "Der gnostische und kanonische Johannes" in the *Zeitschrift für miss. Theologie*, 1900, Heft I.

<sup>2</sup> The possibility of this is not to be disputed. Even Zahn formerly held the composition of the *Acts of John* to have taken place possibly about the year 130 (in the Introduction to his edition of the *Acts* in 1880). Why he now, in his *Geschichte des neutestamentl. Kanon*, ii. 864, takes a different view, I do not know. Harnack leaves the date of these *Acts* quite indeterminate.

if not that, then he took him from the same legend, originating in Gnostic circles, which Leucius has worked up in his *Acts of John*. Whichever alternative is adopted the result remains for our problem exactly the same, viz. that the Evangelist captured the authority of John the Apostle-Prophet, under whose ægis he placed his Church-Gnostic work, from the camp of those very Gnostics whose extravagances it was his purpose to combat, while mediating between their spiritual Christianity and the common faith of the Church. And since this Gnostic Apostle-Prophet John has his ultimate root in the Prophet of the Apocalypse, the Gospel may fairly be described as an Apocalypse of a higher order, purified and spiritualised by the influence of Gnosticism.

In arriving at this result we have answered at the same time the question regarding the date of origin of the Gospel. As the Gnostics whose existence is presupposed in it first appeared, according to Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, VII. xvii. 106) in the time of Hadrian, the Gospel cannot have been written before 125 A.D. And since the Epistles of Ignatius, Polycarp, and Barnabas, all written about 130, betray no acquaintance with it, we must put it a decade later still. To the fourth decade of the century points also the harsh anti-Judaism of the Gospel, for it was only after the second Jewish war (132-135) that the opposition between Jews and Christians arrived at that pitch of intensity which finds expression in the bitter anti-Judaism of the Evangelist. This date, of course, becomes absolutely necessary if the conjecture is accepted which sees in the words (v. 43) "If another shall come in his own name, him will ye

receive," a direct allusion to Barcochba, the leader of the Jewish rising under Hadrian, who was hailed as the Messiah, a conjecture which seems to me very probable.<sup>1</sup> To go beyond the period 135-140 for the date of the Gospel does not seem to me justifiable, since about the middle of the second century the first traces of the use of the Gospel begin to appear; perhaps in Justin, but certainly in Gnostic circles. Valentinus' pupil Heracleon wrote the first Commentary on the Gospel, from which we may conclude that in his time (150-170) the Gospel was already held in high esteem among the Gnostics. In the Church, however, it was some time later before it was recognised as an apostolic work; indeed it was still strongly opposed by the conservatives (the Alogi). Only from the time of Tatian, Theophilus, and Irenæus does it gain for itself a place alongside of, nay, even above, the older Gospels. Chapter xxi., which forms a kind of appendix, may have been written to facilitate its introduction into the Church, for it is obviously designed to allay the Roman Church's jealousy on behalf of the primacy of the Apostle Peter by means of a friendly compromise between him and John, and at the same time to dispel the doubt about the Apostle John's authorship of the Gospel by the express testimony in verse 24 that the beloved disciple witnesses to this and has written it (*i.e.* the contents not only of chapter xxi. but of the whole Gospel). This testimony certainly seems calculated for rather simple-minded readers, since in the immediately preceding verse 23 the death of this same beloved

<sup>1</sup> xi. 48 and xvi. 2 are also prophecies after the event, referring probably to the situation during and after the Jewish war.



disciple is indicated as a fact,<sup>1</sup> so that he cannot have written "this"; but that invalidates the assertion of his having written the preceding portion, with which this chapter professes to form one whole. To this witness from another hand no importance can be attached; what a curious relation it bears to the self-witness of the Evangelist in xix. 35 we have already seen. Holtzmann justly pronounces that "the passages which form the well-known self-witness of the Apostle display each in itself, and more especially in their mutual relation, a kind of ambiguity which can in no case be accidental."

The reason for this I believe that I have shown above.

<sup>1</sup> The ambiguous way in which the death of the beloved disciple is half asserted and half denied, perhaps finds its explanation in the legend of the Johannine tradition, according to which John indeed died and was buried, but nevertheless was not really dead but slept and breathed in his grave, so that the earth was moved by his breath (*v. sup.*, iii. 186).

## THE ORIGIN OF THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

### CHAPTER VIII

#### INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE EPISTLES.

#### CONCLUSION

WHILE the Fourth Gospel aims at mediating between the intellectual Christianity of Gnosticism and the faith of the Church, and only incidentally and tacitly opposes the extravagances of the heretical Gnostics by its positive representation of the true Church picture of Christ, the so-called First Epistle of John, on the other hand, is a polemic against Gnosticism. It is written by a Church teacher who, no doubt, walks in the footsteps of the Evangelist, and, like him, has adopted much from Gnosticism, but nevertheless he stands in principle much further from it than the Evangelist, adapts its formulas more closely to the Church's faith, and makes a much more decisive breach with heretical Gnosticism than he does. The warning against false teachers who are endeavouring to lead the Church astray runs through the whole letter, which is, by the way, not a real letter at all, but a catholic epistle to the whole of Christendom in the name of the Church's apostolic doctrinal tradition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hilgenfeld, *Einleitung*, p. 682.

From the polemic here directed against the false teachers we can gain a sufficiently clear impression of their character. They were men who asserted of themselves that they knew God, had fellowship with Him, were of God, and for that reason no longer had sin, and needed no reconciliation or forgiveness of sins, but who nevertheless (in the judgment of the writer) had neither the true faith in Christ Jesus as the Son of God who had appeared in the flesh, nor the true Christian morality and love of the brethren. They had originally belonged to the Church, but had separated themselves from it and were now held by it to be antichrists and wandering spirits; on the other hand, they found favour with the non-Christian world because what they taught was in accordance with its mind and spirit (iv. 5). Obviously we are here in the presence of Gnostics who were endeavouring to spread heretical teaching regarding Christ and God, and who at the same time broke away in unloving arrogance from the Church, with its conservative beliefs, and showed a tendency towards a morally dangerous indifferentism and antinomianism. Gnostics they certainly were; for prominent among the claims which we are told they made for themselves are these: that they knew God, abode in Him, had fellowship with Him and were in the Light (i. 6; ii. 4, 6, 9). They prided themselves, therefore, on being distinguished from ordinary Christians by a deeper knowledge of God, which was at the same time a mystical fellowship with God, a connection with the pure world of light and truth, by which they were raised above all possibility of sin. In the lofty consciousness of their intellectual possession of truth they considered themselves also to possess

an ethical perfection for which the question of redemption and reconciliation was already transcended (i. 6-10). Their doctrine of Christ is also Gnostic, showing traces both of the pure Docetism of the false teachers combated by Ignatius, which denied that the Divine Christ had really come in the flesh and really suffered (iv. 2, v. 6), and also of the modified Docetism or dualism which distinguished between Christ the Son of God and Jesus the Son of Man in such a way that the two only underwent a temporary association and did not really become one, and which therefore did not acknowledge Jesus as the Christ or the Son of God (ii. 22 ; iv. 3, 15 ; v. 1, 5).

These false teachers are certainly not the same as those who are combated in the Apocalypse under the name of Nicolaitans, for in the case of the latter there was no mention of Christological theories. The Nicolaitans were not really, indeed, Christian Gnostics at all, but Jewish-heathen Syncretists, and their antinomianism was not an indifferentism based on a mystic fellowship with God but a crude heathen naturalistic libertinism. On the other hand, the false teachers of our Epistle are so closely connected with those of the Ignatian letters that one might be inclined to suppose them identical with these, for they have as common characteristics the docetic Christology, the ethical indifferentism, and, in particular, the absence of brotherly love (*cf.* Ignatius, *Ad. Smyrn.* vi.). At the same time, as Lightfoot well remarks, the distinction is not to be overlooked that the Ignatian false teachers taught the pronounced Docetism which entirely denied that Christ had come in the flesh and declared His manhood to be a mere appearance, whereas the Epistle of John has

only one passing allusion to this (iv. 2), and generally combats the milder Cerinthian Docetism or dualism, which did not deny that Christ the Son of God had come in the flesh, but only His complete and inseparable union with Jesus, and therefore the Deity of the latter. But that is not, as seems generally to be thought, an earlier, but, as Lightfoot has remarked with unquestionable justice, a later form of Gnostic Docetism, which "became less pronounced as time went on" (Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, i. 381 f.). That might, indeed, appear self-evident to anyone who considers that Gnosticism did not arise out of Christianity but out of Jewish-heathen religious syncretism, and therefore at its first contact with Christianity took up a more direct attitude of opposition to it, both theoretically and practically, than later on, when there had been, from both sides, assimilation and amalgamation. The Gnostic Christ was originally a transcendental æon, one of the spiritual beings which emanated from the Deity, and had nothing whatever to do with Jesus. Even in Saturninus (not to speak of the Ophites and Simonians) His appearance on earth is only in seeming, a mere phantom, as it was also for the false teachers whom Ignatius combats. But Basilides made the heavenly Christ descend upon Jesus at His baptism and remain united with Him until just before His Passion; and Cerinthus (whose Gnosis is that of Basilides, only more closely adapted as regards eschatology [and ethics?] to the faith of the Church) distinguished in exactly the same way between the man Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and the Christ who descended on him from above, but before the Passion flew back to the Pleroma. We have already

noticed in the Gospel numerous, although only tacit, references to the Basilidean Gnosis, but in the case of the First Epistle there can be no doubt that its polemic is directed against the Basilidean or Cerinthian Gnosis, as is several times mentioned by Irenæus (III. xi. 1; xvi. 5, 6, 8). With this agrees excellently the ethical characterisation of the false teachers, as may be illustrated from the following passages. Clement of Alexandria says of the Basilideans (*Strom.*, III. i. 3) that they do not lead a truly Christian life, "for they hold that they have the right to sin in consequence of their perfection, or because they are naturally by birth elect and are destined, whatever happens, even if they now sin, to be saved"; again, V. i. 3, "If anyone thinks, like Basilides, that he knows God by nature, he does not think of belief as free, rational assent; the commandments of the Old and New Testament become superfluous if one is by nature saved, as Valentinus holds, and by nature believing and elect, as Basilides thinks. For in that case, even without the coming of the Redeemer, this nature might at any time come to light. But if they should declare the earthly life of the Lord to be necessary, that makes nonsense of their assertions about nature, because in that case the elect cannot be saved by nature alone, but only by learning, and being purified, and practising good works"; II. iii. 10, "The Basilideans hold faith to be a matter of nature, and assert of the elect that they discover the sciences without proofs by rational insight; the Valentinians, however, ascribe faith to us simple Christians, but to themselves knowledge (Gnosis), since in them, as those who are by nature saved, there dwells a better seed

which is as widely distinguished from mere faith as the spiritual from the psychic. The Basilideans also say that faith, conjoined with election, belongs in a measure to every man by nature, since the earthly faith which every nature possesses is a consequence of its heavenly election. Where, then, is there room for the repentance of the formerly unbelieving by which forgiveness of sins comes? Therefore baptism no longer has a rational meaning, nor the holy seal, nor the Son, nor the Father"; III. iv. 31, "How can such people (Gnostics), who practise the same things as those whom even the heathen hate— injustice, unchastity, avarice, adultery—assert that they alone have known God?" (1 John i. 6 f. is then quoted against them). Finally, in Clement the assertion is cited from the fragments of Theodotus the Valentinian (*Ecl. Proph.* xv.): "The believer has, it is true, received forgiveness of sins from the Lord, but he who is in the state of Gnosis sins no more, and therefore has from himself the forgiveness of everything further."

To this false Gnosis the author of our Epistle opposes the true, the marks of which are the Church's confession of the Son of God who has become one with Jesus, and the ethical doing of the truth in righteousness and brotherly love. He does not desire to reject Gnosis entirely; he himself, just like his master the Evangelist, lays the greatest stress upon the knowledge of God, of Christ, of truth; but whereas his opponents placed their Gnosis above the faith of the Church, and professed, in their intellectual arrogance, to be children of God by birth and men of the Spirit who have got beyond good and evil, who need no reconciliation and forgiveness, our

author, on the contrary, asserts that only that Gnosis is true which remains at one with the Church's faith and life, and that only they are in truth begotten of God who show themselves to be the children of God by acknowledging God's Son Jesus, who prove their faith by doing righteousness, and by practical love to the brethren. He shares, therefore, like the Evangelist, the Gnostic doctrine of the two classes of men, the children of God and the children of the devil; indeed, he even adopts the Gnostic saying, "He who is begotten of God does no sin, because His seed abideth in him,<sup>1</sup> and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God" (iii. 9, v. 18); he knows and assents to the Gnostic conception of an essential Sonship to God, which is the presupposition and not the consequence of faith and love (iv. 7, v. 1), but he gives this Gnostic idea the ethical turn that they, and they only, can hold themselves to be children of God who possess faith and the love of the brethren, while heretics and schismatics betray, by the very fact of their being such, that they are not children of God, but of the devil. That draws the fangs of the antinomian danger which lurks in the Gnostic doctrine. The predestinarian relationship to God, and mystical fellowship with God, and Gnostic knowledge of God, are, indeed, retained, but their real essence is not found in an ethically unfruitful

<sup>1</sup> Compare with this, besides the passage quoted above from Clem., *Strom.*, II. iii. 10, also what Irenæus tells us (*Adv. Hæc.*, I. vi. 4) of the doctrine of the Valentinians, οὐ πράξις εἰς πλήρωμα εἰσάγει ἀλλὰ τὸ σπέρμα τὸ ἐκείθεν νήπιον ἐκπεμπόμενον, ἐνθάδε δὲ τελειούμενον ("It is not our doing that brings us into the pleroma, but the seed which was sent forth thence when it was small, and is here being brought to maturity").



knowledge with a tendency to indifferentism, but in the pious spirit which manifests itself in brotherly love, and, in the humble consciousness of its own imperfection, relies on the reconciliation and forgiveness brought about by Christ (i. 6—ii. 6, iii. 14—24, iv. 7—v. 5).

In all this the writer of the Epistle is in essential agreement with the Evangelist, but he emphasises his opposition to the extreme forms of Gnosticism more sharply than the latter, and he comes proportionately nearer to the traditional views of the Church. He begins his Epistle with a paraphrase of the prologue to the Gospel, which is only distinguished from its original by the fact that the conception of the personally pre-existent Logos, which was new to the Church and suspicious on account of its Gnostic suggestions, is avoided, being generalised into the "word of life" (*cf.* p. 83). But his purpose in giving up the conception of the personal Logos is not to minimise in any way the Divine in Christ; on the contrary, "by eliminating the Logos conception, which in the Gospel comes between, the unity of God and Christ is brought to so high a degree that in quite a number of cases there is no possibility of deciding whether God or Christ is spoken of. Monarchianism, which was general in the second century, shows itself here not in the Artemonite (Ebionite) tendency, but in that characterised by the formula *δοξάζειν τὸν Χριστόν.*"<sup>1</sup> Similarly the writer of the Epistle abandons the giving of an independent position to the Spirit as the

<sup>1</sup> Holtzmann, *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.*, 1882, p. 141. This essay is excellently adapted to make clear the relationship between 1 John and the Gospel of John.

Paraclete and reserves this term for Christ Himself (ii. 1), speaking of the Spirit in impersonal expressions as an "anointing" (ii. 20), and as an entity capable of subdivision, of which all Christians have received a share (iv. 13). The reason that the writer gives up the independence of the Logos and the Spirit is undoubtedly his dread of coming too near to the Gnostic æons and "false-gods" (v. 21), and letting the solid ground of Biblical monotheism slip from beneath his feet. And it must be admitted that in this reversion to type—if one cares to call it so—of the theology of the Evangelist, the religious interest did not suffer much; indeed the relation of the Christian to God appears simpler and closer than it did there. For the mutual indwelling in one another is, in the Epistle, an immediate relation between God and the believer; whereas in the Gospel it is mediated through Christ. Christ is there the immediate object of the love of God, the focus from which its rays stream forth to Christians, whereas in the Epistle we find it said that God and His love abide in us, and are fulfilled in us, if we love the brethren, since he who loves is himself, as such, begotten of God; and that we have joy towards God and the certainty that our petitions are heard, not simply if we ask in the name of Jesus, but if our heart does not condemn us, because we keep His Commandments. The Johannine mysticism is not, therefore, weakened down, but its ethical foundation is more expressly emphasised than in the Gospel; though, indeed, it is not lacking there (*cf.* vii. 17, xiv. 21, etc.).

Another peculiarity of our Epistle in contrast with the Gospel is that Christ is twice called the "propitiation (*ἱλασμός*) for our sins" (ii. 2, iv. 10). In this

formula the writer comes nearer than the Evangelist to the usual terminology of the Church, but he combines with it, in i. 9 and iii. 5, the thought, which, indeed, is not foreign to the Evangelist either (i. 29, xvii. 19), of the efficacy of the death of Christ in taking away sin itself, that is to say, in morally purifying and sanctifying men. The most remarkable divergence is in the eschatology. The writer of the Epistle still shares with the Church of his time the expectation of the impending visible Parousia of Christ (ii. 18, 28 ; iii. 2), for which the Evangelist had substituted the abiding presence of Christ in the Spirit. But since in the Gospel also there is mention of a "last day" (vi. 39, xii. 48), while in the Epistle eternal life is thought of as something not wholly future but also now present (iii. 14 f.), this must be considered only a difference of degree.

It must be admitted that none of these peculiarities is sufficiently radical to constitute a cogent proof that the author of the Epistle is a different person from the Evangelist; yet taken together they do make the impression that a difference of authorship must be considered probable. The writer of the Epistle must have been someone standing in close relations with the Evangelist, perhaps a pupil who had formed himself on the theology of his master. But it happened with him, as in our time it has happened with most of the pupils of Schleiermacher, that in his eager effort to make the great thoughts of his master serviceable and profitable for the Church as a whole he became more conservative than his master had been. He therefore wrote a sharp repudiation of the heretical Gnosis, and gave to the Johannine Gnosis, where it seemed to approach

dangerously close to the heretical, an unobjectionable form and interpretation, adapted to the common consciousness of the Church. Since we have noticed a similar intention in the appendix added to the Gospel by another hand (chapter xxi.), it is natural to conjecture that the same successor of the Apostle who in that after-word (xxi. 24) set the seal of the Apostle's authority upon the Gospel and opened the way for its acceptance by the Western Church, may also have written the first Epistle of John to serve as a commendatory letter accompanying the Gospel, and at the same time to show how by means of the true Johannine Gnosis the false Gnosis of the heretics could most effectually be combated. But in that case the date of the Epistle is not to be put too near that of the Gospel, but must be brought down to about the middle of the second century.

The two short letters which have come down to us under the names of the Second and Third Epistles of John differ from the First Epistle in all respects, and had also in the Church, from the first, a different status. While the First Epistle shared throughout the fate of the Gospel, and where this was accepted was likewise held to be Apostolic and Johannine, the two others were for a long time questioned. The Muratorian Canon represents them as written by another hand, "in honour of" the Apostle John. Had they been written by the same author and at the same time as the First Epistle this difference of estimation in the Church would be very difficult to understand. Whereas the First Epistle is an anonymous encyclical to Christendom without definite address, the two others are addressed respectively to

a definite Church and to a church-member named Gaius, and their author describes himself as "the Presbyter." This Presbyter is held by many to be Papias' John the Presbyter, but it is difficult to see any satisfactory ground for this. There were certainly presbyters enough in those days besides that particular one, and the addressees would doubtless have no difficulty in distinguishing the author, who was personally known to them, from other presbyters, even if he was not the "famous" presbyter of Papias. That this man, of whom we know nothing except that he handed down the Chiliastic "saying," should have interested himself in Gnostic theology and engaged in anti-Gnostic polemics, is highly improbable. Then, too, that John was called "the Presbyter" in the primary sense of the word, as "the aged," not in reference to office in the Church; whether he held such an office or not is not recorded by tradition. On the other hand, the Presbyter of the letters is an official person who claims respect for his official dignity, prescribes to the believers with whom they are to associate, gives letters of recommendation to itinerant preachers, and regards the non-acceptance of these as a grave insult. That transports us to the time of Ignatius, when office in the Church was in process of consolidation, and collision between the regular authority of the bearers of such office and insubordinate and ambitious church members was the order of the day (*cf.* 3 John 9 f.). And we are referred to the same date by the anti-Gnostic polemic in 2 John 7, which so closely resembles a phrase in Polycarp's letter to the Philippians (vii. 1) that it is *possible*, though not *necessary*, to think of a dependence of the one upon the other. The false

teaching here attacked is not the same as in the First Epistle; it is not the dualistic separation of Jesus from Christ, but the same thoroughgoing Docetism which we constantly found in the false teachers combated by Ignatius, in reference to which it has been remarked above that it is earlier than the milder Basilidean or Cerinthian form of dualism combated in the First Epistle.<sup>1</sup> We have therefore to look for the author of the two short epistles in the circle of the friends of Ignatius, and to place their origin about the same time as the Ignatian letters, that is to say, about 125–130 A.D.

Thus instead of the one Apostle John of tradition who is said to have composed the whole of the Johannine writings about the end of the first century, we find these writings distributing themselves among four different authors, none of whom was the Apostle, at four different periods: (1) The Apocalypse, by John the Prophet, *circa* 100; (2) the two short letters, by an anonymous presbyter, *circa* 125; (3) the Gospel, to chapter xx., *circa* 135; (4) the appendix to the Gospel, and the First Epistle, *circa* 150.

<sup>1</sup> That 3 John is earlier than the appendix chapter (xxi.) in the Gospel may be shown by a comparison of 3 John 12 with John xxi. 24. For the phrase which in the former passage gives a good sense is in John xxi. 24 applied and transformed in such a way that it betrays itself as an imitation by its self-contradiction and confusion. Cf. Thoma, *Genesis des Joh.-Ev.*, p. 813 f.

## THE JOHANNINE THEOLOGY

### CHAPTER IX

#### GOD AND THE WORLD

IN accordance with the explanation which has just been given of the origin of the Gospel and Epistles of John, the Johannine theology is to be understood in the light of its connection with, and opposition to, the Gnosticism of the Hadrianic period, in which the Oriental mystery-religions became so penetrated with Hellenistic idealism and Pauline Christianity that the resulting syncretistic religion became for the Christian churches as attractive as it was dangerous. The purpose of the Evangelist, as well as of the author of the First Epistle, was to make the elements of truth in this mighty religious movement of his time serviceable to the faith of the Church, while rejecting its dangerous extravagances. In the Epistle, however, the anti-Gnostic polemic predominates; in the Gospel, the mediating tendency. The Johannine theology is therefore not to be explained directly from the Philonian religious philosophy; its immediate bases are, on the one hand, the "deutero-Pauline" Christianity of the churches of Asia Minor, founded by Paul and developed under the influence of Hellenism, and on the other the

Gnostic religion of the Hadrianic period, especially as it took shape in the Schools of Basilides and Cerinthus. Hellenism was the common ground on which the Gentile-Christian church beliefs came into contact with the Gnosticism of the time, and therefore it was only a Christian of Hellenistic culture, familiar with the writings of Philo, who could venture to undertake the great task of mediating between the religion of the Church and that of the Gnostics. In this sense we may certainly say that the Johannine theology is the ripest fruit of that Christian Hellenism which was partly founded by Paul and was further developed by deutero-Paulinism, but we must not overlook the fact that to this development the syncretistic Mystery-religion and Gnosticism of Western Asia had made an essential contribution. Unless we take into account this principal factor, which gave the immediate impulse to the production of the Johannine writings, the Johannine theology, with its numerous allusions to Gnosticism and the Mysteries, cannot be rightly understood.

The Johannine theology falls into simple divisions on the basis of its leading ideas. The starting-point is the antithesis of God and the world, which forms the presupposition for the Christian doctrine of salvation. Then the overcoming of the antithesis has to be described. It is accomplished in three ways and three stages: first by the preparatory action of the pre-existent Logos; next by the historical manifestation and action of the incarnate Logos-Christ; thirdly, by the abiding presence and continuous revelation of the Spirit who is sent by the Logos-Christ as his *alter ego* and representative. Finally we have to describe the effects of this revelation in



the sanctified life of the earthly Church, which is continued and completed in the eternal life of the perfected Church.

In opposition to the Gnostics' mythical doctrine of a plurality of gods and æons, which was destructive of monotheism, the Fourth Evangelist has emphasised more explicitly than any other New Testament writer the cardinal truth of the monotheistic doctrine of God. The knowledge of the one true God is, according to him (xvii. 3), eternal life, true religion; Christ's life-work consisted in making known to men the name of the Father, that is, the nature of God as it is revealed in the name of the Father, in initiating men into the knowledge of the nature of the invisible God, which is hidden from their natural powers of apprehension (i. 18, xvii. 6). The essential character of the Divine nature is thus expressed in iv. 24: God is Spirit, and desires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. This predicate includes, in the first place, a negative aspect—superiority to all limitation of local sanctuaries and sensuous forms of worship. Even that goes decidedly beyond the thought of 1 Kings viii. 27 f., where, for all the immeasurable exaltation of the being of God, the particular place where the Temple of Jerusalem stands continues to be thought of as the place of His name, where prayer is to be made to Him. Here, on the contrary, the inwardness of the spiritual life, the consciousness of the thinking and willing personality, is indicated as the only appropriate sphere of God's worship, because the spirituality of God itself is not conceived merely as the negative quality of not being confined in space, but also in the positive sense of a thinking and willing which is completely at one with itself and communi-

cates itself to others. Therefore, truth (light), life, action, and love are the "moments" included in the conception of God as Spirit. God is spoken of as the true (iii. 33, viii. 26), or as a light in which is no darkness (1 John i. 5), because His thinking and willing are not merely complete in themselves, having pure truth and holy goodness for their content, but for us also are the principle of all true knowledge and good will. His word is truth, and has a sanctifying power (xvii. 17); when a man does the truth, his works are done in God, in union with God's true and holy nature (iii. 21); he who is of the truth has, in view of his inner affinity of nature and community of origin with the Son of God, the capacity to hear the voice of Christ which testifies to the truth (xviii. 37). Further, God is spoken of as the Living One, because He has in Himself the source of life, and communicates it to all others (vi. 57, v. 26). His life is, however, not a passive possession, but an active power, which expresses itself in ceaseless action, as John expressly remarks in opposition to the Jewish doctrine of the Sabbatic rest of God (v. 17). At the same time, God's action upon the world is not here, any more than in Philo, immediate, but from the creation onwards is mediated by the Son; though, since the latter only does the works which the Father has shown Him, given Him, committed to Him, God Himself is the ultimate ground of all the activity involved in the ordering of the world and the giving of life and light. The motive of His action is love, which desires to communicate itself, and cause others to partake of its own life. It is true that the saying that God is love is not directly found in the Gospel but only in the First Epistle, but indirectly the same

is also taught in the Gospel. The first and most immediate object of the love of God is the Son of God ; Him the Father has loved before the foundation of the world, and has given Him His glory as His own (xvii. 24, 10). But the love which unites the Father with the Son extends also to men, whom He has given to the Son as His own, for the very purpose of bringing them into the same union of love with the Father by revealing to them His name, *i.e.* His nature (xvii. 6, 11, 21-26). It is true that it is not all men who are objects of the love of God and Christ, but only a certain number chosen out of the world, who are expressly contrasted with the rest of the world or of mankind as beings of a higher origin (xvii. 9, 14, 16). But since these form the kernel of the world and the final cause of the remainder of creation, it can also in a sense be said of the world in general that God loved it, and in His love for it gave His only-begotten Son, that those who believe in Him might have eternal life (iii. 16). This view, which is peculiar to John, of the limitation of the Divine love to His own, who from the beginning belonged to Him and were therefore destined to become Christ's own, or believers, is of great importance for the whole structure of His doctrine of salvation. Since those who belong to God were from the beginning objects of His love, they do not need to be, in the first place, delivered from the wrath or punitive judgment of God, which, according to Paul, rests on the whole of natural humanity ; all that is needed is the realisation by their own personal consciousness of the relationship in which they have always stood towards God ; and this is effected by the revelation of the truth in Christ. The rest of the

world, indeed, lies under the wrath of God (iii. 36), is excluded from the life and love of God and delivered up to darkness and death, to the evil one; but from this condition there is so little possibility of deliverance that Christ, in His solemn parting prayer, expressly limits His intercession to His own, whom His Father has given Him, and on the other hand excludes the world from it (xvii. 9). From this point of view, too, is to be understood what John says about the Judgment, or rather about God's not judging: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," while at the same time he says, "God hath not sent his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world through him might be saved; he who believeth in him is not judged; he who believeth not is judged already," namely, because he loves darkness more than light, and therefore remains impenetrable, unreceptive towards the light (v. 22 ff., iii. 17 ff., xii. 47 f.). These statements follow logically from what has been said above about the Divine love. God's action in the world is only that of beneficent love, not of punitive judgment; but because His love is only directed to the chosen number of higher natures or men of God, the judgment takes place without Divine intervention as though of itself, by the very fact that the distinction which subsisted from the beginning between these men of God and the ungodly world comes to definite manifestation. The judgment is the historical *krisis*, or division, brought about by the sending of the Son of God, between the children of God, who have a natural affinity for the Son of God, and the world at enmity with God, with which they have hitherto been inter-

mixed. How widely conceptions of this kind, which take their premisses from Philo and have their nearest analogues in the Gnostic systems, are separated from the primitive Christian expectation of the return of the Messiah to judge the world, not to speak of the Old Testament conception of Jahweh's victorious judgment of the nations, is clear to anyone who is willing to see it.

In what has gone before we have already touched on the twofold aspect of the Johannine conception of the world. The world is on the one hand the creation of God through the Logos (i. 2 f.), the object of the Divine love, and the scene of the mission and work of the Son of God (iii. 16 *et al.*), and, in so far, His property (i. 11—unless, as is possible, the Jewish people is to be understood by τὰ ἴδια). But in its other aspect the world is the complete antithesis of God, is related to Him as the earth to the heaven (the latter is never included in the conception of the world), as the lower to the higher, the flesh to the spirit, the darkness to the light. It is the sum of all that is ungodly, sensuous, and therefore corruptible, vain, and worthless, showing itself among mankind as alienation from and enmity to God, as religious darkness and moral evil—in short, as sin. Man, inasmuch as he is flesh born of flesh, is opposed to the Divine Spirit, and cannot of himself understand Divine truth (iii. 6, 12), and just as little is he able of himself to do anything good (xv. 5). He is like a blind man who walks in darkness and does not know where he is going (xii. 35, ix. 39). This condition, which is natural, and therefore not in itself to be reckoned as sin (ix. 41) rises in most men to a conscious and deliberate resistance to the light of the Divine truth: men love

darkness rather than light, yea, they hate the light, and will not come to it, because they do not want to be convicted by it of the evil of their works (iii. 19 f.). Since the truth is not in them, since they seek their own honour and not the honour of God, and seek honour from men instead of honour from God, since they love the world and its corruptible pleasures and have not the love of God in them—in short, since they prefer to do the lusts of their father the devil; therefore they cannot and will not hear the truth of the revelation of God in His Son; they lack both the capacity and the desire to understand His word, and therefore they hate Him without cause (v. 41, viii. 40 ff., xv. 24 f.). It is in its hatred of Christ that the nature of the world, in its antipathy to God, its slavery to sin, comes to supreme expression, and so reveals itself also for what it is in fundamental principle, viz. as something demonic, as the offspring of the devil.

The God-opposing nature of the world is summed up in its personal head, the Prince of this World, or Satan, who plays a prominent rôle in John's thought. His nature is the complete antithesis of the nature of God and the Logos; as the latter is truth, love, and life, so the former is deceit, hatred, and death. He has not his abiding place, the element in which he lives, in the truth; deceit is his very being. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own. Similarly, he is a murderer from the beginning, the instigator of Cain's fratricide, and of the death of men in general (viii. 44; cf. Wisd. ii. 24). From him is derived, as the effluence and activity of his nature, all the falsity and all the hatred of men, especially unbelief and enmity towards Christ, such as was shown by the

Jews, who are therefore called children of the devil, whose desire is to act according to the lusts of their father (viii. 41-44). Of corporeal action of the devil such as is implied in the Synoptic narratives of possession, and in many utterances of Paul, there is no mention in John, because here the popular conception of the devil is so spiritualised into the sum and substance of ethical and religious evil that even his activities are only to be traced in the domain of the spiritual life. The only "possessed" person in this Gospel is the traitor Judas, into whom, at the Supper, after the morsel that Jesus handed him, the devil entered, and who is therefore himself called a devil, as it were the incarnation of the devil—the antithesis to the incarnation of the Logos in Christ (xiii. 27, vi. 70). But in the struggle which Satan wages against Christ and His followers, he is from the beginning the defeated party. He cannot prevail against Christ, because he finds in Him, as the Holy One, nothing on which he can lay hold (xiv. 30). It is true that he can bring about the death of Christ by inspiring Judas; but by this very death Satan's kingdom and power are to be destroyed. In the Johannine transfiguration scene, which follows on the visit of the Greeks and introduces the story of the Passion, Christ sees judgment executed upon the world, and the Prince of this world cast out, deposed from his rule over the world (xii. 31). Therefore in the First Epistle it can be described as the very purpose of Christ's manifestation to destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8). This fact, that the dominion of Satan has been and is overthrown by Christ, shows that he is not a being equal with God, an anti-God in the sense of the

strictly dualistic systems. Nevertheless, John does not teach, like the Church theology, that the devil is a creature of God, and as such was originally good, and only by a subsequent apostasy became the devil. Not only is nothing of the kind anywhere indicated, but it is actually in contradiction with the Johannine conception of Satan, to whose nature deceit and hatred belong from the beginning. Evil in person, which is what Satan here is, cannot, in fact, be thought of as created by God. For this reason John has said nothing at all about the origin of Satan. He has not theorised on this question, any more than on that of the reason for the God-opposing nature of the world, which, nevertheless, was created by God through the Logos; he takes as his starting-point the manifold forms of evil in the world, and traces them back to a single ruling and causative principle, without inquiring further how this principle, which is thought of as a real being,<sup>1</sup> is to find a place in the scheme of a Divine creation. It is just this judicious moderation, which in developing a dogmatic conception goes only so far as the need for the interpretation of religious experience demands, while skilfully avoiding the dangerous questions of the systematising theorist and the resultant crop of mythological imaginings,<sup>1</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> This would not, it is true, be the case if in John viii. 44 the proper translation was "You are of your father the devil. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for his (the devil's) father also is a liar." This is linguistically by no means an impossible translation; and if it were correct, the Evangelist would be here adopting the doctrine of the Ophites, or Archontics, or Gnostics in the narrower sense, according to which the devil is described as the son of the last of the seven archons, Sabaoth the God of the Jews (Epiphanius, *Hær.*, xxxviii. 4, xl. 5). Against this



distinguishes the Johannine theology from heretical Gnosticism, to which precisely in the doctrines of the world, of Satan, and of the two orders of men, it on the whole so closely approaches.

But the more harshly John judged the general nature of the world, and the more the actual evil in it concentrated itself, in his view, into a demonic kingdom and pointed back to the devil as its father, the less possible was it for him to include all mankind without exception in this judgment. For experience, after all, constantly shows exceptions to this rule: men who love the truth, have an inclination to good and a desire for the things of God, and who therefore believably accept the Divine revelation in Christ. Now since John had referred the general unreceptivity of the multitude to a natural antipathy to the Divine, an affinity with the devil, he was quite logical in making the receptivity of the elect towards good a God-related element in their nature, due to their being originally the children of God. He speaks of men who hear the voice of Christ, accept His witness, come to the light because they are of the truth and do the truth (iii. 21, 33; xviii. 37), because they are begotten of the Father and taught by the Father (vi. 44 f.), because they are of God (viii. 47), the Father's own whom He has given to the Son to be His own (xvii. 6 ff.), the sheep whom the

interpretation, which is defended by Hilgenfeld (*Ev. und Briefe Johannes*, p. 160 ff.), there is just one objection, namely, that it seems necessarily to imply a radical rejection of the Old Testament religion such as is in other respects quite foreign to the Gospel of John. Nevertheless, the possibility must be left open that in viii. 44 the Evangelist in his anti-Judaic zeal made use of a conception current in Gnostic circles without reflecting on its dangerous doctrinal consequences.

Father has given to the Son, who know the Good Shepherd's voice and follow Him, who indeed belong to Him as His predestined possession even before they are brought into one flock (x. 16, 26 ff.), the children of God who are at first scattered throughout the world, but are to be gathered by Christ into the unity of the Church (xi. 52). These predicates obviously cannot all be understood as referring to the effects of the Christian revelation, because they profess to give the reason why some rather than others display receptivity towards this revelation, and because in the last two passages it is expressly those who are scattered, and have still to be brought together into one flock, *i.e.* to be converted to Christianity, who are described as the sheep of Christ and children of God. In these passages, therefore, nothing else can be meant than a God-related natural endowment which belongs to some men rather than others, an original derivation from God and attachment to God, which as a natural adaptation and predestination to Christian sonship to God, forms in a sense the germ and commencement of it, which by the revelation in Christ is brought to conscious and effective reality. John therefore teaches, like Philo, Saturninus, and Basilides, that there are two orders of men, the ungodly who are sprung from the world and its Prince, and are un-receptive towards all that comes from God, and those who are sprung, not from the world but from God (xvii. 16), who have affinity with God and are receptive towards things Divine. This doctrine is obviously remote from the Old Testament view, according to which the antitheses of ethical experience have their ground in the free-will of individuals. But it even goes a step beyond the Pauline doctrine

of predestination. If, according to the latter, election and reprobation rest upon a free Divine act of will, for John, on the other hand, it rests on an originally opposite determination of the two natures which is not effected by a Divine, any more than by a human, will-act, but is an ultimate necessity of nature which does not admit of further explanation. The doctrine itself may, however, be, at least in part, explained by the actual conditions of the writer's time, in which the opposition of the non-Christian world to Christianity intensified itself to such a point that a mind which looked for principles behind phenomena might well see in it the opposition of the demonic nature to the Divine. At the same time we must remember that dualism in general (flesh and spirit, higher and lower) belonged from the first to the fundamental ideas of Hellenism, and even in the Book of Wisdom and in Philo had received a very decided, if not altogether logical, expression; and that especially in the Gnosticism of the second century it had become the dominant conception, from the influence of which even the thinking of the Church theologians of the time could not entirely free itself. At the same time, however, the Johannine theology succeeded in excluding the dangerous practical inference from the Gnostic determinism by teaching men to recognise the marks of the God-related nature, not in an ethically unfruitful knowledge (Gnosis) with a tendency to moral indifferentism, but in true faith in Christ and active love towards the brethren. "The dualistic scheme of things is therefore the same in the two cases, but the Johannine criteria of sonship to God (1 John iii. 10, 19, 20; iv. 2, 6, 13) divide men on a different system from that of the Gnostic criteria of 'spiritual' manhood" (Holtzmann).

## THE JOHANNINE THEOLOGY

### CHAPTER X

#### THE LOGOS AND THE INCARNATION

IN Philo, mediation between the transcendent God and the world is effected partly by the half-personified Divine powers, partly by the Logos who sums them up within himself, who as a "second God" and organ of the primal God formed the world, and is the agent in all Divine revelation in the world. The Gnostics, too, had from the first interposed between the Supreme Deity and the world a number of semi-divine intermediate beings, or world-ruling spiritual powers. These were originally conceived of as star-spirits, in accordance with the Babylonian mythology, but later, under Hellenistic influence, they were thought of rather as hypostatised powers of spirit life. Among the number of these "æons" there is found, even in the earlier Schools, a Logos, though not, it is true, as the highest of them, and not as the maker of the world, as in Philo. It must therefore be left an open question whether this conception was borrowed by the Gnostics from Philo's teaching, or whether it perhaps came more directly from the Stoic theology, which had made Hermes, the messenger of the Gods, into a personified word of revelation or

Logos.<sup>1</sup> However that may be, it is at least certain that the Logos is found in the earlier Gnostic systems, but never plays a predominant part as in John. He is only one among the many intermediate divine beings or æons, and not even the highest of them, for in the systems of Basilides, Cerinthus, and Valentinus there stands above him the Monogenes or Nous, who is his father. He is neither the principle of creation nor of redemption; his relation to the Divine Soter (Redeemer) or higher Christ, is obscure and vacillating. Finally, even this redeeming spirit has no incarnation ascribed to him. He descends, indeed, upon Jesus, but only to enter into a temporary connection, not into personal union with Him. It is clear that in this Gnostic doctrine a Divine revelation in Jesus such as the Church believes in, becomes quite problematical. Both its absolute truth and its connection with the original creative revelation and with the historical revelation in the Old Testament—in fact, its historical and ethical character in general—is here gravely jeopardised, for the transcendental Saviour-God might just as well have revealed Himself in some other form as in Jesus; the historical personality of Jesus is forced aside by one of the numerous Mystery-divinities, and thus the peculiar excellence, the absolute greatness, of Christianity is endangered. This danger had first

<sup>1</sup> This conjecture is naturally suggested by the statement of Hippolytus (*Philosophumena*, v. 7), to the effect that the Naassenes worship one Cyllenius under the form of Hermes as the Rational (λόγιος, *v.l.* λόγος), adding Ἑρμῆς ἐστὶ λόγος, ἑρμηνεὺς ὢν καὶ δημιουργὸς τῶν γεγονότων καὶ γινομένων καὶ ἐσομένων. Justin, too (*Apol.*, I. xxi.), says that the Christian doctrine of the Logos of God, who is begotten of God, is the same as when the Greeks call Hermes the Logos who is sent by God as messenger.

been recognised by Ignatius, and he had therefore passionately contended that the Divine being, whom he, like the Gnostics, presupposed, had in Jesus become truly man, had revealed Himself in human conditions, in the flesh, had been truly born, had truly suffered, died, and risen again; he therefore often speaks of Jesus as "our God," ascribes to him pre-existence before the world-period, says that He came forth from the Father and is united with Him; once (*Ad Magn.*, viii.) he even calls Him "God's eternal Logos who proceeded forth out of silence." This expression carries an obvious suggestion of Gnostic terminology—and not that of the Valentinian system only—and forms a connecting link between it and the language of John. The Logos is here the only half-personified Divine word of revelation which followed on the preceding non-revelation or "silence" of God, but the term has not yet in Ignatius the fixed and exclusive significance of a *terminus technicus*. It is still interchanged with the more general expressions that Christ is the knowledge (*γνώσις*) of God, the will (*γνώμη*) of the Father, the mouth (*στόμα*) of God, which cannot lie (*Ad Eph.*, xvii. 2, iii. 2; *Ad Rom.*, viii. 2). Ignatius was, indeed, only concerned to maintain the human reality of the revelation of the Divine in Jesus; the other and equally important question, whether the Divine being who was revealed in Jesus was only one of the many intermediate divine beings, or whether he was the sole and universal mediator of revelation, lay outside his horizon.

This is the point at which John intervened with his Logos doctrine. He was in agreement with all the Gnostic systems of his time, Christian and Jewish, heretical and orthodox, in holding that between God,

who was in Himself unknowable, and the world, there was some kind of mediation by a supra-mundane divine intermediate being; but he recognised the grave danger that out of the plurality of intermediate beings which in the Gnostic doctrine of the æons proceeded forth, or were begotten, or emanated from the primal God and from one another, there would arise a theogonic and polytheistic system of thought by which both the cardinal truth of monotheism and the absoluteness of the Christian revelation would be jeopardised. Therefore he reduced the plurality of the Gnostic æons or divine and spiritual beings into which the Divine pleroma was divided to a single mediator of the whole of the revelation of God, which began with the creation, went through a preliminary stage in pre-Christian history, and came to its fulfilment in the Person of Jesus. That he chose for this *sole* principle of revelation the name of Logos—which was already current, indeed, among the Gnostics, but had not previously been of paramount importance—was doubtless due to the influence of the Philonian Logos doctrine, which had, as a matter of fact, already influenced the deutero-Pauline Christology (the Epistles to the Hebrews, Colossians, and Ephesians). In this sense it may certainly be said that Philo contributed to the Johannine Logos doctrine, but not in the sense that it can be explained solely from Philo. Its primary explanation is doubtless to be found in its antithesis to the Gnostic doctrine of the æons and of “Christ,” as even in early times Irenæus clearly enough asserted in the passage in *Contra Hæreses*, III. xi. 1, to which we have several times referred. But at the same time it is not to be forgotten that this antithesis is only partial.

John shared with the Gnostics the fundamental presupposition, which was then general, of the necessity of a mediation between God and the world by an intermediate divine being, and for that reason also shared with them (as Ignatius did) the fundamental view of Christ as a supra-temporal Divine Being. His Christ, no less than the Christ of the Gnostics, is construed from above downwards, not from below upwards. He is thought of according to the Oriental conception of incarnation, not the Occidental conception of apotheosis. This decisive point is so unmistakably established by the Johannine prologue, and so unanimously confirmed by the analogy of the teaching of Ignatius and other Fathers of the second century, that it is almost unintelligible how "modern" theology succeeds in constantly ignoring it and thereby making the understanding of the Johannine theology so difficult for itself. All its violent interpretations, all the ingenious attempts to force the Johannine statements into line, at once reveal their futility so soon as the reader frankly places himself at the historical standpoint of the author, and keeps clearly before him the author's anti-Gnostic purpose, as well as the common ground of Gnostic presuppositions, which he shared with his adversaries.

Since John assumes that the meaning of the term Logos is already known to his readers he gives no further explanation of the why or the wherefore of there being a Logos, does not attempt in any way to explain His origin from the Divine Nature—he shuns the dangerous path of Gnostic emanations and theogonies—but is content to begin with the statement that the Logos already was, at the beginning (*cf.* Gen. i. 1), in fellowship with God, and was



Himself Divine in nature. These characteristics of the Logos—pre-existence, deity, personal distinction from, accompanied by closest fellowship of life with God—are included for John in the single concept of the “Only-begotten” (Monogenes) Son of God, a concept which he did not himself form any more than that of the Logos, but adopted from Gnosticism, and therefore assumes to be already known. But whereas Gnostics like Basilides, Cerinthus, and Valentinus distinguish the Logos from the Monogenes as the son of the latter, for John, on the contrary, the main point is that the Logos Himself is the Only-begotten Son of God, and therefore the sole possessor of the whole fulness of the Divine glory, which therefore has been completely revealed in the incarnate Logos, and has become the object of human perception and experience. Since this is the point on which the emphasis lies, because it is the point on which the religious interest is concentrated, to which the theoretical presupposition of the eternal Divine being of the Logos as the only-begotten Son of God is meant to lead up, it is quite natural that this concept should be first expressly mentioned here (i. 14), where the incarnation of the Logos is mentioned. But to conclude from this that it is not the Logos but the man Jesus who is the only-begotten Son of God, would be to misunderstand the Evangelist completely. He says: “We beheld his glory (*i.e.* that of the Logos who dwelt among us in the tabernacle of the flesh), a glory such as belongs to the only-begotten, coming to him from his Father, full of grace and truth.” This glory therefore belongs to the nature of the Only-begotten as such, as the sole heir of all His Father’s possessions

—how, then, could it first become His after His appearing in the flesh? It is, indeed, only by His appearing in the flesh that it has become visible and communicable to us, but in order to be able to reveal it to us He must have already had it in Himself; and He has had it from the beginning, for He was the mediator to the world of all light and life from the very first. No one could make known the invisible God except the only-begotten Son, who always lay upon the bosom of the Father, the confidant of all the Divine thoughts, who has come from above for the very purpose of making known what He has seen and heard from the Father (i. 18, iii. 11, viii. 26). The complete revelation made by the historical Jesus therefore depends on His being the incarnate Logos, who as the only-begotten Son has been with the Father and come from Him, and been sent by Him (iii. 16 ff.). To suppose that the only-begotten Son is the product of the incarnation is to cut the nerve of the Johannine doctrine, for the whole emphasis lies on the fact that the only-begotten Son is the agent implied by the incarnation, who only becomes manifest through it. It is, of course, true that the full significance of the Sonship only becomes manifest in the incarnate Logos, that is to say, in the ethico-religious relation of Jesus to His Father; but His religious relation of Sonship rests for John upon the primordial metaphysical relation of Sonship of the Only-begotten, upon His being of the same nature with God, and upon His dependence as the Son upon the Father. The only-begotten Son is eternally and absolutely that which the children of God become in time and only in a certain measure, and He therefore calls God His “own Father” (v. 18)

in a specific sense which is only applicable to Himself.

When the Evangelist, at the beginning of the prologue, has sketched in a few strokes the relation of the Logos to God, he goes on immediately to speak of his relation to the world and to mankind—"All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made"—a statement which is clearly directed against the Gnostic doctrine of the creation of the material world by the demiurge or the archons. In addition, the tacit reservation is suggested that there are some uncreated beings (Satan and his comrades) who do not belong to the portion of the world which was created through the Logos, for, as we have remarked above, John can hardly have held the devil to be one of the creatures of the Logos. Here the dualism which was so deeply ingrained in the thought and feeling of that period makes itself felt and disturbs the symmetry of the "logical" picture of the world. Even the Church has never succeeded in interpreting the obstinate irrationality of experience without the introduction of a Satan; and if it sought to reconcile his existence with the Divine creation by the hypothesis of the fall of an angel created good, one cannot, in truth, count it a defect in our Evangelist that he has dispensed with so naïve an expedient.

It was possible for the Logos to be the mediator of creation, because "in him was life" (verse 4). The word is to be understood here in the widest sense as the power of self-affirmation and self-realisation in general; it receives later its more definite content in connection with the communication of life which belongs to the saving work of the incarnate Logos-

Christ. How the possession of life by the Logos is to be understood is clear from v. 26. "As the Father has life in himself, so has he given unto the Son to have life in himself." God is the absolute, independent, original source of life, but through Him the Son or Logos has become the sole source of life for the world. He is therefore the organ, the channel of all the life-giving powers of the Deity which flow down to the world. Philo taught exactly the same thing about the Logos, and the deutero-Pauline theology taught the same thing about the pre-existent Christ. Following in the steps of both these, John has transcended the Gnostic doctrine of the creation of the material world by inferior powers, and that was a great gain for the Christian view of the world, for by so doing he discredited the principle of ascetic spiritualism and world-negating asceticism and secured for the Christian spirit the right and the power to overcome and re-mould the real world. At the same time he provided a basis for a primordial natural revelation, which is the indispensable complement of every positive historical revelation. For "the life [of the Logos] was the light of men" and the Logos is called "the light that lighteth every man" (verses 4, 9). The mediator of life in the natural world is also the principle of the rational mental and spiritual life of men. Their rational nature and all that goes with it, such as the consciousness of God and the conscience, is, according to this, a general preparatory revelation of the same Divine Principle which revealed itself in history in the various forms of prophetic inspiration, and finally in Christ, as the fulness of mercy and truth. From this results the important conclusion that the historical revelation

cannot stand in contradiction with the natural revelation in reason and conscience, but must attach itself thereto. This thought was also a great gain for the Christian conception of the world. It cut at the roots of the abstract Gnostic supernaturalism and mystic irrationalism, and established the rights of a rational conception, confirmation, and defence of Christianity. How the Apologists immediately after John set themselves to follow up this line of thought we shall see later.

The work of revelation carried on by the pre-existent Logos in pre-Christian times is referred to by John in only a few passages (viii. 56, xii. 41), but these are sufficient to show that the dating back of the revelation of Christ into pre-Christian times answered to a practical need of the Church—that of appropriating the Old Testament as a source of revelation and interpreting it in a Christian sense. This Christianising of the Old Testament is carried out by John with a thoroughness which is only surpassed by Barnabas.<sup>1</sup> Its whole significance is found in the fact that it witnessed in advance to Christ (v. 39). Even Moses had written of Christ; so that those who really believed his writings must logically also believe Christ's words (v. 46 f.). The Old Testament is therefore the word of God in so far as it contains a prophecy of the New, a Christianity before Christ. As for the Jewish Law, however, that is spoken of as a thing wholly indifferent to the author and his readers (x. 34, xv. 25). It is contrasted in i. 17 with the grace and truth which have come to us in Christ, and its incapacity to give life and healing is made, in the allegorical narratives of the marriage

<sup>1</sup> For the Epistle of Barnabas, see below.—TRANSLATOR.

at Cana and of the healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, the foil to the beneficent power which resides in Christ's word. Of the teachers of the Law, moreover, it is said that they are hirelings, nay, out-and-out thieves and robbers, who, without receiving a Divine call, have arrogated to themselves authority over the flock of God (x. 8 ff.). When, finally, practical Judaism, boasting of its Abrahamic descent and hardening itself in its unbelief towards Christ, is accused of descent from the devil (viii. 44), that exactly recalls Barnabas, who explains the carnal mind of the Jews as the consequence of demonic deception. Nevertheless, the precipice of the Gnostic dualism, of which Barnabas goes dangerously near the edge, is avoided, and the historical connection of Christianity with the Jewish religion is firmly maintained. Although even the worship of the Jewish Temple is as transitory a thing as the Samaritan worship on Mount Gerizim, yet salvation is of the Jews, since they have the advantage, as compared with the heathen, of possessing the knowledge of the true God of revelation (iv. 21 f.). The apparent inconsistency of this statement with the other, that no one before Christ had known God, finds its explanation in the previously mentioned relation of the Old Testament prophets to Christ, since they owed all their prophetic recognition of truth solely to being enlightened by the revealing work of the pre-existent Logos.

But all such pre-Christian knowledge of truth is only like the twilight of dawn, which precedes the rising of the sun. The light of the Logos first fully dawned upon the world by his incarnation in Jesus Christ. "The Logos became flesh"—this declaration separates the Christian Evangelist not only from

the Jewish philosopher Philo, who never conceived of an appearance of the Logos in a particular person, much less of his becoming flesh, but also from the heretical Gnostics, who represented the Divine redemptive Spirit either as revealing himself only in the semblance of a human body (Saturninus, the Ophites, Valentinus, Marcion), or else as only temporarily connecting himself with the man Jesus—(Basilides, Cerinthus). In combating this docetic doctrine of Christ, John's immediate predecessor had been Ignatius. The purpose of both was essentially the same—to establish the doctrine that the Divine Being, whom both presuppose, had really become man, and therefore that the Divine and the human side were completely united in Jesus Christ the Redeemer. But whereas Ignatius was content to use for this the vague popular expressions that the Logos had come in the flesh, had been a bearer of the flesh, had been born of Mary, was Son of Man as well as Son of God, fleshly and spiritual, born and unborn, visible and invisible, impassible and suffering,<sup>1</sup> it was reserved for John to embody this thought in the bold, precise and striking formula, "the Logos became flesh" (σὰρξ ἐγένετο), that is to say, a corporeal human being with a body of material flesh such as belongs to men, in contradistinction to the heavenly spiritual beings.<sup>2</sup> How, exactly, in detail the Evangelist represented to himself the passing of the Logos from the heavenly

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Eph.*, VII. xix. xx. ; *Ad Smyrn.*, iv., v. ; *Ad Polyc.*, iii. Cf. *Polyc.*, *Ad Phil.* vii. 1, 2 John 7, 1 John iv. 2 : ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθέναι, ἐληλυθότα, ἐρχόμενον, γενόμενον—the standing formulæ of the anti-docetic polemic.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the exactly corresponding phrase in 2 Clement ix. : ὢν μὲν τὸ πρῶτον πνεῦμα, ἐγένετο σὰρξ καὶ οὕτως ἡμᾶς ἐκάλεσεν.

to the earthly mode of existence can only be conjectured, with more or less probability, from analogies elsewhere. The appearance of a higher spiritual being in an earthly (human, or even animal) body is, in its general form, one of the most widely current ideas in the history of religion from the earliest times; but in the more precise conception of "incarnation" the three following main forms may be distinguished, which are all represented in the Gnostic Christologies: (1) A spiritual being changes itself into a visible form for the sake of temporarily appearing and acting among men, providing itself *ad hoc*, by a miraculous act, with a body, the reality of which—just because it is the result of a magical act—is always problematical, though it can also be conceived as quite material. This is the character of all the theophanies and angelophanies of the myths, both heathen and Biblical. It was on this analogy that the strict Docetists thought of the appearance of the redemptive Spirit in a human form which was more or less illusory, and in any case was not the product of a human birth. (2) A pre-existing spiritual being enters as the soul into the incipient body (embryo) of an earthly living creature (man or animal), and remains during the lifetime of this body its sole principle of spirit-life, completely subject to all the natural conditions of the earthly creature into which it has entered from birth to death. This is the case in all the widely current conceptions of transmigration of souls, whether in the form of the re-incorporation of the souls of those who have previously died, or of the descent of the human souls who are to dwell on earth out of a heavenly pre-existent state. It was on the lines of this last conception that the Elkesaite



Gnostics represented the true prophetic spirit as incorporating itself in Adam and various other Old Testament figures, and then finally in Christ (exactly on the analogy of the Avatars of Buddha). (3) A spiritual being takes possession of a hitherto normal adult man by entering into his body, dwelling in it temporarily or permanently, and using the limbs and senses of the man as its organs, in such fashion that the proper *ego* of the man is thrust aside, and if not exactly eliminated, is nevertheless completely subjected to the spirit which has taken possession of the man. This is the widely-current conception of a man's being possessed, or filled or moved, by an overmastering power, whether it be a good or an evil spirit; in the latter case the indwelling of the spirit manifests itself as holy enthusiasm, in the former as the malady of demonic possession. It was on the lines of this conception that the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism was thought of even in the primitive Christian community (*cf.* the Synoptic narrative of the Baptism); while, moreover, the Holy Spirit was not yet thought of as a personal Being descending from a previous state of individual pre-existence, but as a general Divine power of supernatural action. On the other hand, in the systems of Basilides and Cerinthus it was the pre-existent Christ-Spirit which descended upon Jesus at His baptism, out of the heavenly Pleroma, and remained in Him until near His death, but flew back before the Passion to the Pleroma; a theory which is to be understood as a first attempt to mediate between docetism proper (Saturninus) and the Church's belief regarding Christ (*v. sup.*, p. 157). If now we ask, on the lines of which of these types of incarnation John

conceived the "becoming flesh" of the Logos, the choice lies, as it seems to me, between (2) and (3). For (1) is excluded by the fact that John makes Jesus speak of His having been born (xviii. 37), and makes the Jews speak of His father and mother (vi. 42), and that he expressly emphasises the reality of the death of Jesus (xix. 35); so that the purely docetic conception of an illusory humanity of Jesus is as definitely repudiated by John as by Ignatius. Accordingly we have only to ask: Did John think of the incarnation in such a way that Jesus was born as the incarnate Logos, and therefore that the Logos entered into the embryonic body of Jesus as its soul and remained until His death its only life principle, the subject of all His physical, psychic, and mental states, of all that He did and suffered? Or did John think of the incarnation of the Logos as only taking place in the course of Jesus' life, and if so, then no doubt at the moment when (at the Baptism, which he passes over in silence) the Baptist saw the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove and abiding upon Him? Either is possible in itself, and in view of the analogies elsewhere. The first follows the analogy of the entering of pre-existent souls into bodies; the second that of the taking possession of men by an indwelling spirit which rules in him alongside of, and above, his own natural *ego*. In favour of the former, it may be urged that it is more exactly in accordance with the formula "the Logos became flesh," if before the birth of Jesus He transformed Himself into the soul of the incipient fleshly body, so that this was from the first, and exclusively, only the human organism informed by the Divine Logos. This view is, however, attended with some difficulties. Was it

possible for the Logos to transform himself into the soul of a child without emptying himself of the very content of his Divine nature? But John never hints at a self-emptying of the Logos, but makes him dwell in all the fulness of His glory in the tabernacle of the body (i. 14). Further, the question arises: Is it probable that John thought of the Divine Logos as the sole principle of life in Jesus, the subject of all the bodily and psychic conditions of which he frequently makes mention? And again, if the Logos was incarnated in Jesus from the first, why did He need yet another descent of the Spirit upon Him at His baptism? Could the Person of the Logos, in which from the beginning all light and life were included, need—or be in any way capable of receiving—an increase of its Divine life-powers by an influx of the Spirit coming from without? And why has John so expressly emphasised the fact that the Spirit which then descended upon Jesus *abode* upon Him, unless he saw in this event the beginning of the life-long union of the Divine principle with the person of Jesus, that is to say, the incarnation of the Logos? The objection that it is not, after all, the descent of the Logos, but of the Spirit, which is spoken of on this occasion, can hardly be considered a decisive argument against this view. It must be taken into account that a definite distinction between the Logos, or Son, and the Spirit, such as later became fixed in the Trinitarian doctrine of the Church, was not yet firmly grasped by the teachers of the second century. The Roman Hermas goes so far as to describe the Spirit as the original Son of God; the Egyptian author of 2 Clement does not hesitate to describe the Spirit as the subject of the incarnation (*v. sup.*, p. 191,

note); Ignatius sometimes speaks in general terms of the human revelation of God in Jesus, sometimes contrasts the Divine and human sides in the Son of Man as the spiritual and corporeal; and Tertullian does the same. On these analogies we have no right to expect in John a clear distinction between the Logos and the Spirit in relation to the person of Christ. (How matters stand in regard to the "Holy Spirit" or Paraclete bestowed by Jesus upon His disciples is another question, which will fall to be discussed later.) But if this is so, there is nothing to hinder us from assuming that John understood by the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism—the term "Spirit" was prescribed to him by the Gospel tradition—exactly the same event which he describes earlier as the becoming flesh of the Logos in Jesus, and later (iii. 34) as the bestowal of the Spirit without measure or limit upon the envoy of God.<sup>1</sup> If, now, we recall again that both Basilides and Cerinthus made the divine redemptive spirit descend upon Jesus at His baptism, and remain united with Him until shortly before His death, we cannot refuse to recognise that the Johannine doctrine of Christ approaches very closely to that Gnostic doctrine. What distinguishes between them is, in the first place, that the higher spirit which is there united with Jesus is only one of a number of divine intermediate beings, whereas here it is the only-begotten Son and sole mediator of revelation, the Logos, who includes within Himself every divine Spirit; and in the second place, that for the Gnostics the union is a separable one and is dissolved again

<sup>1</sup> This view is also defended by Hilgenfeld, *Ev. und Br. Joh.*, p. 254 f., and Réville, *Le iv. Ev.*, p. 255 f.

before the death of Jesus, while here it is an inseparable one, subsisting through death and beyond it. This distinction might be overlooked by simple Christians like the "Alogi," who could therefore ascribe the Gospel to Cerinthus as its author. But in truth it portends nothing less than the overthrow of the Gnostic dualism and the establishment of the Church's conception of *God-Manhood*, the profound truth of which, and its central significance for Christianity, must not be underestimated because it has to be admitted that it was first formed by the aid of Gnostic supernaturalistic presuppositions, and limited solely to the person of Jesus.

The view here given of the Johannine doctrine of the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus will receive further confirmation, as we proceed, in all the Johannine statements regarding the person of Jesus Christ the Redeemer. We have to keep in view throughout the two equally essential aspects; the Redeemer to whom the Gospel history refers is, according to John, on the one hand the incarnate Logos, and, as such, the subject of superhuman, divine predicates; on the other hand, He is the man Jesus who is subject to the ordinary conditions of human life, and from the religious point of view is the perfect pattern for Christians as children of God. That the two aspects are not brought into complete unity was to be expected *à priori*, and appears in many vacillations and inconsistencies. Nevertheless, it may be said that it is the author's special purpose to picture the interplay of the Divine and human in the unity of the personal life of Christ, which is Divine in essence, human in manifestation. Indeed, we may go further, and say that the author of this "Church-Gnostic"

gospel, which aimed at overthrowing the abstract dualistic Gnosticism, had chiefly at heart the true manhood of Christ, and that therefore no account of the Johannine Christology which minimised this side of it would be correct. But, on the other hand, we must be careful not to overlook the fact that the human, ethical life of the Redeemer always in John has as its basis the unquestioned presupposition that in Him the metaphysical Divine nature of the Logos is incarnated. To eliminate this presupposition, by a forced exegesis, from the clear statements of the author, simply because it is uncongenial to modern thought, is a method of dealing with it which cannot be adopted by the unprejudiced historian. The more fully modern theology in its endeavour to read back its own dogmas into primitive Christianity yields to this fatal tendency to rationalise, the more clearly will it be the duty of a strictly historical presentation of the Johannine Christology to take as its starting-point the Divine aspect of the incarnate Logos-Christ.

At the outset it must be laid down that the Logos after His incarnation remains the same *ego* with the same Divine characteristics as before it, is conscious of this selfhood, and gives clear expression to this super-human self-consciousness. In the solemn prayer in John xvii. Christ twice speaks of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (verse 5), which was given Him by His Father before the foundation of the world (verse 24). To the Jews he says in viii. 58: "Before Abraham was, I am"; that is to say, My personal existence goes back beyond Abraham. Further, Jesus repeatedly speaks of having come forth from the Father, of having

come down from heaven, and contrasts with that His going to the Father, His ascending where He was before, His ascending to heaven (iii. 13; vi. 33, 38, 42, 51, 62; viii. 42, xiii. 3, xvi. 27 f.), expressions which can only be understood of movement in space, and therefore involve a consciousness on the part of Christ of having come forth from a state of heavenly pre-existence. These same passages also make it clear that the reason why the pre-existence of Christ is of such extreme importance to the Evangelist is that it is the basis of His unique knowledge of Divine things, which He has personally heard and seen in the presence of the Father (iii. 11, 31 ff., viii. 38 ff.). That is a conception which was widely current in the Gnostic and Mystery systems of the time, viz. that the secrets of the other world could only be made known by a being derived from those higher regions. John shared this conception, but gave it a new content; for the magic formulas by which the spiritual powers are to be mastered, the password by which the heavenly gates are to be opened, he substitutes the words of eternal life, the revelation of the name (nature and will) of the Father, and the promise of the dwellings that are prepared in the Father's presence. But it is not only of heavenly things that the Johannine Christ possesses a unique knowledge; in relation to other things also He has a supernatural knowledge which comes very near to Divine omniscience. He knows from the first His "hour," *i.e.* the predestined time of His sufferings and death, and also from the first knows the traitor, as, on the other hand, He greets Simon at His first meeting with him as the Rock-disciple, and, before his meeting with him, has recognised Nicodemus

under the fig-tree (by a mysterious kind of second sight) as a disciple without guile; in short, "He needed not that any should testify to him concerning men, for he knew of himself what was in the man" (ii. 25), for which reason Peter can say to Him, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (xxi. 17).

And His power is as unlimited as His knowledge. His work is constantly to do the works which the Father has given to Him, shown to Him, committed to Him. He does the Father's works, just as He speaks His words, as the selfless organ of the Father, who works in Him and through Him. And it is just because He is properly only the channel through which omnipotence works that he possesses an absolutely supernatural wonder-working power. The Johannine miracles go far beyond those of the Synoptic Gospels; they are no longer psychologically explained exhibitions of the Saviour's love, which is strong through faith, but "signs," means of making known the Divine glory, the world-ruling might of the only-begotten Son of God. Since the Father has given Him to have life in Himself (v. 26), and the life is the light of men (i. 4, viii. 12), He can give sight to the man born blind, and recall to life Lazarus, who has already lain four days in the grave, a prey to corruption (ix., xi.). Even His own resurrection is not a being raised from the dead; it is His own act—He Himself again takes possession of life, as He has freely laid it down (x. 17 f.). In virtue of this possession of Divine attributes, which belong to Him as the incarnate Divine Logos, the Johannine Christ can ascribe to Himself unity with the Father in a sense which goes far beyond the religious union



with God of the other children of God, because it rests not on a purely ethical but also upon a metaphysical community of nature with God (x. 30, 33, v. 18). He can even speak of Himself as the visible manifestation of God, as a true theophany (xiv. 9 f.). This self-witness to His unique Divine Sonship and essential Deity is the touchstone both for the unbelief of the Jews and for the faith of the disciples: for the former the ground of their accusation of blasphemy and of their deadly hatred (v. 18, x. 31 ff., xix. 7); for the latter the ground of the believing confession "My Lord and my God" (xx. 28), a confession in which the Jewish Messiah of the primitive Christian community is exalted into the Saviour-God of the new world-religion, or, rather, the latter is substituted for the former.

But now for the other side! The same Redeemer who as the incarnate Logos is true God is also as Jesus, in whom the Logos dwelt, true man. While he allows Himself to be worshipped as God, and claims for Himself equal honour with God (xx. 28, v. 23), He, on the other hand, calls Himself a man who has spoken the truth (viii. 40), and knows Himself to be entrusted with the conduct of the Judgment because He is "a Son of man" (v. 27) and speaks of God as His, as well as His disciples', Father and God (xx. 17). The true humanity of Jesus is implied above all by His birth as the child of human parents. John not only makes no mention of a supernatural birth from the Virgin, but clearly excludes it, because he makes not only the Jews but also the believing disciple Philip speak of Joseph as the father of Jesus, without giving any indication that this opinion is incorrect (vi. 42, i. 45). No doubt,

when the Jews, in opposition to the higher claims of Jesus, appeal to their knowledge of His earthly origin, He replies that they judge after the flesh and do not know His higher origin from Him who has sent Him, who is true, even from God (vii. 28 f., viii. 14 f.). But the effect of that is not to describe the Jews' knowledge of the human parentage of Jesus as incorrect, only as incomplete, superficial, and one-sided, since in recognising His human side they overlook His higher side. For John, Christ's Divine mission and heavenly origin and His natural birth from human parents are not mutually exclusive, any more than the Divine and the human which meet in the one person of the Redeemer; as the Logos He has come from God and from heaven and is God's Son; as the man Jesus he is also the son of Joseph and Mary. The supernatural in the Person of Jesus was put so far beyond doubt by the incarnation of the Logos in Him, that no further need was felt to refer the bodily life of Jesus to a supernatural origin. In this connection it may be left an open question whether John was wholly unacquainted with the legend of the supernatural birth or whether he purposely ignored it: either is possible.<sup>1</sup>

As He was naturally born, so, in the course of His earthly life, Jesus was subject to the natural human conditions of existence. He feels hunger and thirst and weariness (iv. 6-9), and weeps at the grave of His friend Lazarus (xi. 35); in face of the near approach of the decisive hour He is troubled in soul by the apprehension of death (xii. 27), and is troubled in spirit at the thought of the traitor (xiii. 21),

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Holtzmann, *N. Tle. Theol.*, ii. 417-420, 426; Réville, *Le iv. Ev.*, p. 131 f.; Grill, *Entstehung des iv. Ev.*, i. 330.

though, in contrast with this, His emotion at the grave of Lazarus is represented as a voluntary "troubling of himself" (xi. 33—*ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν*), while the "raging in spirit" on the same occasion (*ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι*) perhaps points to an inner struggle between the Divine impassivity of spirit and the human emotion of soul. In any case, these numerous passages leave us in no doubt that in the Johannine Christ "the human life of the soul is never entirely swamped in the sea of the Logos idea" (Holtzmann). And this implies that, despite the mystic oneness of Jesus with the Logos, and with God, who abides in Him and does His (the Father's) works (xiv. 10), it is possible to assert of Him a free ethical relation of obedience and love to the Father, which is related to human piety and morality as its analogue and pattern. To do the will of Him who sent Him is His "meat" (iv. 34), the strength and the substance of His life. He does nothing of Himself, but as the Father has taught Him, so He speaks, and therefore He knows that He who sent Him is with Him and has not left Him alone, because He always does only what is well-pleasing to Him (viii. 28 f.). It is because He has kept the commandments of His Father that He abides in possession of His love, and experiences the fulness of joy which His followers shall also share if they abide in His love and keep His commandments (xv. 9 ff.). Because He has completed the work which the Father has committed to Him, of glorifying the Father upon earth, He can pray that the Father may now glorify Him with the glory which He had with Him before the world was (xvii. 4 f.). These passages show us how John thought of the Divine

and human sides in Christ as in personal unity. The consciousness of the incarnate Logos of His primordial existence with the Father, in possession of His love and glory, forms, it is true, the constant presupposition of all His words and actions; but this transcendental background does not abolish, but is actually the cause of, the perfect, free self-surrender of the Son to the Father in obedience and love. In this ethico-religious relation of Sonship of the earthly Redeemer and pattern of the children of God, the essential oneness with God of the eternal Son or Logos finds its temporal manifestation and human realisation.

Thus John has not only transformed Philo's abstract metaphysical conception of the Logos into a concrete ethico-religious ideal figure, of the most precious content and the most potent influence, but has also overcome the phantasmal docetism and the fantastic Christological speculations of Gnosticism. He has so united the historical Christ pictured in the Gospel tradition with the Saviour-deity of the Gnostic mysticism that the latter receives from the former historical and ethical concreteness, while the former receives from the latter universality and theological depth. The redemptive Spirit of the Gnostics had descended out of the pleroma of Deity into the earthly world, without really becoming man; the Messiah of the Gospel tradition had risen in the faith of the Church to a heavenly quasi-deity, without really becoming God: the Johannine Logos Christology is the first and fundamental synthesis of this twofold movement—towards the incarnation of God and the apotheosis of man. His Christ is both equally: the "Son of God," the God-Logos who has become man; the "Son of Man," the man Jesus who

has become God. The former is the line of thought which is set forth at the beginning in the prologue, the permanent validity of which is, as we have seen, again and again recalled in the course of the Gospel; the latter is the predominating point of view in the historical narrative, where naturally the subject who acts and speaks in human fashion is more prominent; and for this reason even the term *logos* is no longer used in the technical sense of the prologue, but only in the ordinary sense of the spoken word. But to conclude from this that the thought of the incarnation of the Logos which occupies so prominent a place in the prologue is forgotten or negated in the remainder of the Gospel, would be, in view of all that has been urged above, the most complete misunderstanding of the author's purpose. Literary tact, if it were nothing else, but still more the necessary respect for the Gospel tradition, would prevent him from actually putting this Gnostic term into the mouth of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Even in the anti-Jewish apologetic and polemic of the Evangelist these two conceptions, that of incarnation and that of apotheosis, are both made use of in turn. Sometimes the Jews, who see in Jesus only the son of Joseph, are referred to His higher origin from God and from heaven, and to His having existed before Abraham (vii. 28, viii. 42, 58; iii. 13); sometimes their accusation of blasphemy is refuted

<sup>1</sup> It has justly been pointed out that in Philo also the word *logos*, in addition to its technical use for the metaphysical intermediate being, occurs a vast number of times in the ordinary sense of "word" or "speech," a double sense which can be naturally explained from the genesis of Philo's Logos-doctrine (*v. sup.*, iii. 50 ff.), from a combination of the religious idea of the word of revelation with the philosophical idea of the world-reason.

by recalling that even in Scripture men to whom the word of God came are called Gods; how much more might He whom the Father had consecrated and sent into the world, call Himself the Son of God? (x. 35 f.). Here sonship to God seems to be conceived as an exalted dignity, after the analogy of the apotheosis of rulers and heroes; and this mode of regarding the matter, which took as its point of departure the man Jesus, was of course in the controversy with the Jews the most obvious and the best adapted to the end in view. But that this is not the whole, but only one side of the Johannine doctrine of Christ, is—quite apart from the prologue—very instructively shown by the passage in iii. 13 f., where it is said that to go up to heaven has never been possible to any other but one—to Him, namely, who came down from heaven, the Son of Man, who is essentially at home in heaven, and for that very reason is destined to be exalted to be the heavenly deliverer of all who believe. Here is expressed with admirable clearness the mutual relation of the two conceptions. The exaltation of the man Jesus to be the heavenly Lord and Saviour, which lies in the conception of the Son of Man, has for its necessary presupposition the coming down from heaven of the “Son of God,” or Divine Logos, who has been incarnated in Him. From this it is clear that any account of the Johannine Christology which suppresses or sets aside one or other of these two aspects, destroys the very essence of his doctrine, the great historical significance of which consists precisely in the fact that it combines into a unity the Oriental conception of the incarnation of the Divine in man with the Occidental conception of the apotheosis of the human. If “modern”

theology finds an attraction only in the latter train of thought, the deification of the man Jesus, that is a matter of taste about which there is no use in disputing, but I find it hard to understand how anyone can imagine that in this way he has got rid of the primitive supernaturalism of the doctrine of Christ—as if the deification of a man were any easier to conceive than the incarnation of God! The only result, it seems to me, is to abandon the true kernel of the Church's central idea of God-Manhood, without really getting rid of the supernatural form of it which belongs to those ancient times. Would it not perhaps be better to abandon this form, and instead to endeavour to retain, and therefore, first of all, to understand, that kernel? As we cannot here enter further into these questions, I should like first to suggest for consideration the following point—Was not John fundamentally right in his tenet that no one can raise himself to the sphere of the Divine who does not originate from the Divine? Does not this follow from the general law that no one can become anything which he is not already by the constitution of his nature? If, therefore, sonship to God is the ideal which man is bidden to attain (Matt. v. 45), must it not also be the presupposition of his capacity to attain it, and, consequently, the ultimate principle of his nature as man? May it not be, therefore, that the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus, and the apotheosis of Jesus which is thereby rendered possible, may finally come to be for us simply the dogmatic embodiment of the universal truth that man is essentially an incarnation of the Divine Logos, and is therefore enabled and destined to raise himself to a perfection, freedom, and blessedness like God's?

## THE JOHANNINE THEOLOGY

### CHAPTER XI

#### THE WORK OF CHRIST

THE life-work of the incarnate Logos consists in the constant revelation of His nature as Son of God, and therefore also the nature of the Father, with whom He is one. His action, in word and deed and suffering, is just as much the natural and free outflow of His own Divine nature as it is the fulfilment of the will and commandment of the Father who has sent Him: the one in and with the other. Since He is the perfect organ and visible manifestation of God, all that He says is God's word and all that He does is God's work. Having the Divine in Him as its basis, it has the effect of communicating His Divine light and life to men who can receive it, who are thereby taken up along with Him into His intimate fellowship with God. By this teaching John provides a valuable supplement to the Pauline doctrine of redemption. Salvation is not here based, as in Paul, solely upon the death and resurrection of Jesus; the whole life of Jesus is throughout a saving work, and His whole Person is a means of salvation given by God to the world, a bread of life that comes from heaven. It was for the faith of the



Church a pressing need that the onesidedness of Paulinism, which so frankly ignored the earthly life of Jesus and attached itself solely to the exalted Lord, "who is Spirit," should be corrected, and that this ideal Christ of theological speculation should be supplemented by the concrete, pattern life of this earthly Saviour.

A beginning in this direction had already been made in the earlier deutero-Pauline writings, in the stronger emphasis upon the ethical value of the life and suffering of Jesus which is to be noticed in First Peter and the Epistles to the Hebrews and Ephesians. But this correction and extension of Paulinism is first consistently carried through in the Gospel of John, since here the living Spirit of the Son of God, which Paul represents as only coming into operation after the resurrection of Jesus, is operative throughout the earthly life of Jesus from the very beginning, making all the activities of His life into saving acts and means of grace. Thus the doctrine of Christ, which through the influence of Paul and of Gnosticism had been directed to the transcendental heavenly world, returned again from this lofty height to its starting-point, the living figure of the historical Jesus, and thus the circle was completed which in the Church's doctrine of redemption unites the heavenly with the earthly.

Coming to particulars, the work of Christ is the communication of light and life, which He essentially is. The light-giving revelation of truth is in John of special importance, more so than in Paul, but in harmony with the deutero-Pauline Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. Christ is here the mediator of redemption, not so much in the sense that by His

death God's redemptive purpose was fulfilled, but rather because He made known to the world God's will of love. He is the ambassador of God, who revealed to the company of his disciples (xvii. 4 ff.) the Father's name, with all the saving truth which is included in this name; as the Son who has come from above, who shares the Divine confidence, has lain in the bosom of the Father, and has heard and seen heavenly things, He has initiated us into the mysteries of the higher world and the Divine nature which are hidden from every earthly being (i. 18, iii. 11 ff., viii. 38 ff.). These statements, which are to be taken in their natural meaning, and not rationalised into agreement with modern ideas, show clearly exactly how the transcendental background of the Hellenistic Christ served the purpose of making Christianity appear the true fulfilment of what was sought in the heathen Mysteries, as the satisfaction, that is, of the hitherto unsatisfied longing for the disclosure of the mysterious other world, the world of the Divine. That this constituted a special point of attraction, particularly to the cultured classes of the Gentile and Hellenistic-Jewish world of the time, is not open to doubt, and is indeed indicated by the Evangelist when he represents the discourse in question as having been addressed to Nicodemus, a representative of the wise men of this world.

But Christ is not merely the witness to the truth, making it known by His spoken teaching. He also Himself is the truth, which has come to us through Him (i. 18, xiv. 6), for He represents in Himself, in His whole personality, the nature of the Father in a faithful image, so that He can say of Himself, "He that seeth me, seeth the Father"

(xiv. 9). The truth of God has in Christ become for the world the visible reality of a personal life. Accordingly, He is the light of the world, in following whom men shall have the light of life (viii. 12), *i.e.* have it for their own in an inner enlightenment; and of this the healing of the blind man is a symbolical example.

As the personal revelation of the truth of God, He is also the source of the life which comes from God, the bread of life, or the manna from heaven, the water of life which quenches all the thirst of the soul; and the life which He gives is to be understood in the fullest sense of the word, comprehending within itself various elements. He gives life and full satisfaction,<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* a completely satisfying blessedness (x. 10). This consists in the experience of a peace such as the world cannot give, because it is based upon the certainty that the world and its cares are overcome by Christ for all who are His (xiv. 27, xvi. 33). And this is accompanied by perfect joy, perfect because it is secure of the hearing of all its petitions in Jesus' name, because of the love of God (xvi. 22 ff.). Moreover, the life which Christ bestows is not merely a life of blessedness, but a life of moral power. The Son makes men truly free, that is, from slavery to sin and to self-delusion; He causes the power of fruit-bearing to pass into His followers, as the vine to its branches; without Him a man can do nothing of true worth, with Him he bears fruit that abides; the Spirit that goes forth from Him becomes in His followers a well-spring, the life-giving power of which streams forth and never ceases to produce its effects to all eternity (viii. 36, xv. 4 f., vii. 38 f.). This free

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. V., margin.—TRANSLATOR.

and blessed life is also, finally, eternal life, a life which essentially belongs, not to the region of earthly transiency, but to that of heavenly reality, and is therefore above the chances and changes of the earthly, above death and the grave. John includes in the term "eternal life" not only the future life but an already present life which is qualitatively perfect, which possesses the power of maintaining itself indissolubly, and of unlimited satisfaction in itself, because it is of God and consists of knowledge of and fellowship with God (xvii. 3). This life the believer already possesses, in virtue of his faith, which unites him with Christ and God; he has already passed over from death into life, and the hour is not only coming, but now is, when even the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live (v. 24 f.). Moreover, this inner perfectness of eternal life shows itself also in its victorious power over bodily death. He who lives by faith will never die, for he will remain alive even if he (physically) dies; and this eternal life, which is already inwardly present, will be perfected in the future, in the resurrection of the dead; in this sense Christ is called "the resurrection and the life" (xi. 25 f.), as being the ground and pledge of a life which has now begun in faith and will be perfected in the resurrection; and of this the resurrection of Lazarus is the symbol.

Christ is the giver of life even by His word, which is spirit and life (vi. 63), because it has both these as its content and its effect, but He only becomes so in the fullest sense by overcoming death in His own person and making it the means of life. In John, as in Paul, the death of Christ has a special significance for His saving work, but for a different reason. It is not a vicarious expiation of the guilt of sin and the

course of the law—these conceptions were remote from John's whole trend of thought. For this juristic theory, derived from the Pharisaic theology, he substituted a doctrine more in accordance with the Hellenistic consciousness, a doctrine in which two aspects may be distinguished, a moral and a mystical. The death of Christ is, in the first place, the highest proof of His love for His followers; as the Good Shepherd He gives up His life for His sheep; in order to save them from the menacing power of the world and its prince, he offered Himself, as in times of desperate need kings and heroes have offered themselves to save their armies or their people (x. 11, 15, 18). This ethical self-offering of heroic love brought his followers salvation, because the power of the Evil One exhausted and broke itself upon Christ. His voluntary surrendering of Himself to death completed the victory over the Prince of this World, so that henceforth he can have no hold over the Church of Christ; accordingly, as the hour of His Passion approaches, Christ sees judgment executed upon the world, and the prince of this world being cast out, that is to say, despoiled of his dominion over the world (xii. 31).<sup>1</sup> But inasmuch as the death of Christ was the highest proof of His love and obedience, the victorious overcoming of the

<sup>1</sup> This relation of the death of Christ to the overcoming of the devil is not found in the genuine Pauline letters, but only in the probably deutero-Pauline and anti-Gnostic passage Col. ii. 15. This conception certainly originated in Gnostic circles, and is ultimately connected with the widely current myth of the overcoming of Hades and the powers of death by the descent to Hades of a victorious Divine hero. But what a profound ethical version our Evangelist has succeeded in giving of this traditional heathen-Gnostic idea!

God-opposing world-power and the fulfilment of His life task, the glorifying of the Father upon earth, it was also at the same time the means and the beginning of the glorifying and exaltation of Christ Himself. It is not under the aspect of the uttermost self-humiliation (Phil. ii. 7) that John regards the death of Christ, but under that of "exaltation," for in it the Son of God laid aside the humble fleshly garb in which He had appeared on earth and returned to the heavenly glory which He possessed from the beginning (xii. 23, 28, 32; xvii. 5). As His death was not the undergoing of a fate imposed upon Him, but a free self-surrender of His life, so His victory over death does not consist in being raised from the dead by Divine omnipotence, but in a self-effected resumption of that life of which He had never ceased to be the independent possessor (x. 17 f.). And this new life manifests itself at once in His effectual power of blessing, which is as much greater than His power when on earth as the glorified Jesus is higher than the earthly. This mystical power of the death and exaltation of Christ to secure blessing for the Church is expressed under various forms. It finds its most general expression in the illustration of the corn of wheat which must fall into the earth and die in order that it may bear much fruit (xii. 24). As the hidden life-power in the seed-corn is released by its dying in the earth, and becomes fruitful, so the power of the Divine life which is hidden and confined in the earthly person of Jesus is freed by His death from the limiting form of its manifestation in an individual human existence, so that it can now really act with the irresistible power of a spiritual force in giving life and bearing fruit.

This intensified influence of the exalted Christ is more particularly represented either as the sending of the Holy Spirit, which is to glorify Him in His followers and to carry on His work, or as the coming again of Christ Himself in order to take up His permanent dwelling in his followers. The sayings about the return of Christ and the coming of the Spirit (xiv. 16-23, xvi. 13-22) are highly characteristic of John: they waver in intentional vagueness between the personal coming and visible appearance of the risen Christ and His invisible coming in the permanent and inward presence of the Spirit. Alongside of these two forms of the coming again there is no room left for that third form towards which the hope of the primitive Christian community was directed, that of the visible Parousia, introducing a permanent earthly presence of Christ. It is, so to speak, resolved into these two forms, for its two factors, the visible return and the abiding presence, are exactly represented in those two aspects of the Johannine conception of the return—in the visible appearance of the risen Christ on the one hand, and the abiding presence of His Spirit on the other. But the reason that John can so closely unite these two aspects in the single conception of the return, is that for him the coming of the Spirit is most closely connected, both in time and substance, and in fact almost coincides, with the glorifying of Christ which takes place through His death and resurrection. The Spirit is the new form in which the Divine life, hitherto confined to the Person of Christ, streams forth from the crucified and risen Lord and communicates itself to His followers as their own inner possession; as is symbolised in the allegorical inci-

dents in xix. 34 and xx. 22, and more distinctly taught in xii. 24 and vii. 39. Since, therefore, the death of Christ was a sacrificial act of His holy love, by means of which the Holy Spirit became the possession of His followers, it is described in xvii. 19 as a consecratory offering of Christ by Himself, to the end that His followers may be consecrated in truth. It exercises a purifying and sanctifying influence by filling believers with Christ's holy Spirit of love, in virtue of which they feel themselves to be the children of God, purified from sin, consecrated to God, and partaking in the love of the Father (xvii. 19-23). It is this purifying power of the death of Christ which is referred to in the pictorial expression about the "lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world" (i. 29). What is meant is not so much the expiation of the guilt of sin as the bearing away, the doing away with sin itself, that is to say, the morally purifying and religiously consecrating—in short, the sanctifying—influence of the death of Christ as the consecratory offering of holy love.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1 John ii. 2 and iv. 10 Christ is called the propitiation (*ἱλασμός*) for our sins and the sins of the whole world. Here, therefore, the thought which is lacking in the Gospel of the expiation of sin (*ἰλάσκεσθαι*), or the cancelling of guilt through a vicarious work of Christ, is again taken up from the Pauline theology; and, indeed, the "forgiveness of sin" (i. 9) is here more prominent than in the Gospel, though always combined with moral purification from sin (i. 7, 9; iii. 5). This is one of the numerous differences of teaching between the Gospel and the Epistle in which the closer relation of the author of the Epistles to the beliefs of the Christian community may be recognised.



## THE JOHANNINE THEOLOGY

### CHAPTER XII

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE work of Christ on earth is continued by the Holy Spirit, who as "the other Paraclete," *i.e.* advocate, takes the place of Christ. The term Paraclete is taken by the Evangelist from Philo, in whose writings the Logos is often so described. That in John also Christ is thought of as the first, in fact, "the" Paraclete (as He is expressly called in 1 John ii. 1) follows not only from the whole conception of His position as the mediator who represents the community of believers and makes intercession for them, but from the very designation of the Spirit as the *other* Paraclete. John the Evangelist, however, expressly reserved this name for the Holy Spirit working in the Christian community, in order to mark the distinction between Him and the exalted Christ. The Holy Spirit, therefore, takes a more definite position than in earlier theology as a third Divine "subject" alongside of the Father and Son. Even here, it is true, He sometimes alternates with the Father and Son as if identified with them, seeing that in chapters xiv. and xvi. the return of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit dissolve into one another, and the

indwelling of the Spirit in the heart into that of the Father and the Son; while the metaphors of water or breath seem to point rather to an impersonal force than to a personal being. On the whole, however, the conception of the independent personality of the Spirit in distinction to the Father and the Son certainly predominates in John. He is said to be sent by the Son or the Father, or goes forth from the Father at the request of the Son; He glorifies the Son, takes that which is His and makes it known to the disciples, guides them into all truth, convinces the world—in short, He is the independent successor to the work of Christ, or “the Christ who reproduces Himself in His followers” (Holtzmann). In this independent position given to the Spirit we see the traces in John, as in the Epistle to the Ephesians, of the enhanced self-consciousness of the Church which no longer merely looks forward to the coming of the heavenly Messiah but feels itself to be in the present the earthly vessel filled with the Divine Spirit, in a certain sense the permanent continuation of the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus. It is, however, to be observed that the relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son is not yet that of the Trinitarian doctrine of the Church, but comes nearer to that of the Montanists. For when it is said in iii. 34 that God gives the Spirit without limitation to Him whom He has sent, and in vii. 39 that the Holy Spirit (as an independent Principle) was not yet present because (so long as) Christ was not yet glorified; and when, finally, the symbols of the blood and water are interpreted as the issuing forth of the Spirit from the death of Christ (xix. 34), the conception on which all this is based is, doubtless, that the Spirit first passed from the Father to the

Son, and remained, as it were, confined in Him until His death, and only then proceeded forth from Him as an independent entity and the organ of the Father and the Son, so that now the same relation which before had subsisted only between the Father and the Son began to exist between the Son and Spirit—a mode of conception which has a close affinity with Tertullian's theory of the *monarchia per gradus decurrens*.

The Spirit, therefore, since the departure of Christ from the earth, stands in exactly the same relation to Him as from the beginning the Son held to the Father, that of a personally distinct, but in His being and work absolutely dependent, organ, selfless in the perfection of its service. As the Son has glorified the Father upon earth, so the Spirit in turn glorifies the Son; as the Son is sent by the Father and proceeds forth from Him, so the Spirit is sent by the Son; as the Son does not speak of Himself but has received all that is His from the Father, so the Spirit does not speak of Himself, but takes His testimony from that which belongs to the Son (xvii. 4, 7 f.; cf. xvi. 7, 13 ff.). As Christ's work on earth consisted in revealing truth and communicating life, so the permanent activity of the Spirit also consists in this. But the permanent revealing activity of the Spirit goes beyond the revelation of the Son incarnated in Jesus, which was limited both in point of time and of content. The Son could not as yet say all that He had to say, because the disciples had not yet the capacity to receive it; therefore it is good for them that He should go away and send the Spirit, who will finally lead them into all truth (xvi. 7, 12 f.). This thought of a revelation of the

Spirit going beyond the historical beginning and advancing to perfection, is a point which John has in common with Gnosticism and Montanism—and therefore with the progressive tendencies of his century; but in contradistinction to them he keeps within the lines of the Church's faith by expressly emphasising the essential unity and harmony of the permanent revelation of the Spirit with that of the historical Christ. The Spirit takes the matter of His revelation from what belongs to Christ, and by this means glorifies Christ (xvi. 13 ff.). He therefore does not give an essentially new revelation, but only the further interpretation and development of the revelation already given in Christ, the essential completeness of which is firmly held by John (*cf.* i. 17). As the revelation of the truth in Jesus was of saving virtue only for those who were receptive, those who were "of the truth," while on the other hand it became an occasion of judgment for the un-receptive world, whose blindness and hatred of truth was intensified and brought to a crisis by it, thus in fact becoming a judgment upon it, so also the revelation given by the Spirit to the Church has as its reverse side a judgment upon the world. This consists, according to xvi. 8–11, in the fact that He convinces the world of sin, which is made manifest in its obstinate unbelief in Christ; of the righteousness or holy nature of Christ, which is made manifest in His going to the Father, since that sets the seal on His Divine mission; and finally, of judgment, which is manifested in the defeat of the prince of this world, since the return to the Father, or "exaltation" of Christ, is at the same time the fulfilment of the decisive judgment upon the devil or ruler of the

world (xii. 31). The judgment upon the world which the primitive Christian community looked for at the future coming of the Messiah is regarded by the Hellenistic Evangelist as already fulfilled in the fact that Christ, by His death and by His being glorified in the Spirit of the Church, had been proved to be the Holy One of God and the victorious Conqueror of the world.

## THE JOHANNINE THEOLOGY

### CHAPTER XIII

#### MAN'S RESPONSE TO THE DIVINE REVELATION

THE effect of the revelation of Christ and of the Spirit is therefore twofold: in some, faith and life; in others, unbelief and death in sin. The decision of this point does not, according to John, reside in the free choice of men. While faith is for Paul the effect of the call through the word, in which the Divine decree of predestination is realised, in John it is the varying constitution of men's natures, the affinity of some with God, and the ungodliness of others, which determines by an inner necessity their varying attitude towards the revelation in Christ. Those who are "of the truth" or "of God" hear the voice of the Son of God and know it, and follow Him, for they feel themselves moved and drawn towards Him by a natural affinity for the Divine in Him. As "light-natures" they recognise the light which has dawned in Christ, and they come to Him and acquire for the first time the power of really "seeing," and of having light in themselves; the slumbering God-implanted life in them is awakened by the voice of the Son of God to a real vitality and vivid consciousness of itself, and the scattered children of God are

gathered together into the fellowship of the one flock of Christ. It is this inner attraction felt by the God-related natures towards Christ which is referred to in the characteristic statements vi. 44 f., 65, "No man can come unto me except the Father draw him; every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to me; no man can come to me unless it be given him of my Father." This drawing, teaching, giving, of the Father can only refer to the inward revelation of the Divine voice in the hearts of God-related men, in the sense that it is the condition and explanation of their capacity to receive the revelation in the word of Christ. That this external Divine word finds an echo in the inner voice of God, and that the Divine in man is sympathetically attracted, awakened, and vivified by the Divine in Christ, is, according to John's profound doctrine, the way in which faith arises. The logical converse of this is, of course, that men in whom the inner attraction towards the Divine is lacking, because they are not of God but of the world and the devil, are also incapable of hearing the voice of Christ and accepting it in faith—they lack that receptive organ without which even the perfect light of the revelation of Christ must remain without effect (viii. 42-47, xvii. 9). Or rather, it does exercise an effect upon them also, but a disastrous effect. It intensifies their blindness into a deliberate refusal to see, into a hatred of the light, into an obstinate continuance in sin, and into the expression of this attitude in the persecution of Christ and His followers. Thus the coming of Christ does not, properly speaking, introduce anything absolutely new into the world; it only brings the Divine and un-Divine seeds which were already

present in mankind to development and ripeness, to decision and separation; that is the *krisis* which is carried out in the world by Christ. While this doctrine is remote from the Old Testament and Early Christian view, it has a close affinity with the Philonian doctrine of the divisive function of the Logos, but an even closer resemblance to the Basilidean doctrine according to which redemption consists in the separation of the light-natures from the dark world-element, effected, here also, by the knowledge of the truth. But the religious determinism which John shared with the Gnostics does not, for him, exclude moral responsibility or moral obligation, but supplies the basis of both, as appears in his doctrine of faith and love.

Faith arises from the influence upon receptive human souls of the Divine life and light which are personally revealed in Jesus Christ. It consists in the trustful acceptance of the word of Christ, especially in the recognition of Him as that which He reveals Himself, by His self-witness, to be, as all that is comprehended in the "name" of the Son of God, a recognition which goes on to complete itself in practical form by confession of Him and attachment to His person. It is thus the movement of the whole man towards Christ, seeking to be united with Him, a movement which has various stages and takes place in various forms, so that knowledge, love, and obedience may be subsumed under it. The relation of knowledge to faith is, in John, twofold, according as the fuller content is given to one concept or the other. Sometimes knowledge is the primary stage, as the theoretical presupposition, the perception, on which practical recognition and believing accept-



ance follows (xvi. 30, xvii. 8). Sometimes, however, faith, as confident trust in the testimony of another, comes first, and knowledge follows as the higher and final stage, in which case knowledge is an independent conviction based upon personal experience of the Divine truth (iv. 42, vi. 69). It is only to this latter knowledge of God and Christ, which includes within it, and forms the final stage of, the practical experience of faith, that the statement in xvii. 3 applies—that it is eternal life. The content of the confession of faith, however, is not a particular element in the work of salvation—not, for example, as in Paul, the atoning death and the resurrection of Christ—but simply the Person of Christ Himself, and that in the undivided unity formed by His Divine nature as the only-begotten Son of God and His human manifestation in Jesus. The conviction that Jesus is exactly what He claims to be, the complete revelation of God (*ἐγώ εἰμι*), is the most essential element in the Johannine faith and knowledge. To that there is next attached most closely the following of Him, obedient hearing of His word and keeping of His commandments, in which love manifests itself, and by which the “abiding in Him” and the indwelling of Christ and the Father in believers is conditioned (xiv. 21 ff.; xv. 3, 6 ff.; 1 John ii. 3 ff.). In this ethical mysticism lies the higher unity in which the Pauline antithesis of faith and works is reconciled. Faith is, according to vi. 29, itself the work of God, which means primarily, in view of verse 28, the work willed by God, but at the same time also the work wrought by God, in which all the works “wrought in God” (iii. 21)—the whole spiritual temper and outward action of the man, thought of as well-pleasing to God—are compre-

hended. As a man can do nothing good without abiding in faith-union with Christ, as the branches abide in the vine, so, conversely, a man cannot abide in Him, in His and His Father's love, without keeping His commandments and bearing much fruit of good deeds (xv. 1-9; 1 John iii. 6-24, iv. 7-11). Since the manifestation of life in ethical action is the fruit of the religious union of life with Christ and God, it serves in the first place as a practical proof of the true presence of the latter, and in the second place also as the means of maintaining and confirming it. In this way religious determinism, which in its abstract intellectual form as held by the Gnostics constituted a serious danger to the ethical life of the community, becomes a deep reason, a strong motive in favour of it, as indeed it also is in the theology of Luther and Calvin. It is not, of course, to be overlooked that a certain antinomy is involved. Is it not, indeed, the law of all life that "all is fruit and all is seed"—action the fruit of a necessarily precedent "being," and equally, in turn, the seed of a "being" which shall necessarily come to pass? Thus what we call ethical development always includes in itself an element of necessity alongside of the element of freedom (self-activity); and if the former, regarded from the religious point of view, inevitably appears as determinism, it by no means follows that it is incompatible with the ethical element of freedom. Otherwise we should be obliged to regard religion and ethics in general as an irreconcilable antithesis, and that is, of course, in principle, to abandon the Christian standpoint altogether.

We have now got a point of view from which it is possible to understand the relation in which the

ideas of having faith, and of being a child of God, stand to one another for John. In the first place, we have to notice that, for John, to be the child of God is neither the ideal of ethical likeness to God after which men ought to strive, as in the Synoptic Gospels, nor, again, as in Paul, the believer's rights and privileges of sonship established by the Divine legal act of adoption, but a relationship of nature between the man and God, due to his having been begotten by God. The children of God are those who have been begotten of God, of the Spirit, from above, or, shortly, those who are "of God," in whom the seed of God permanently dwells and works (John i. 13, iii. 3, 5 f.; 1 John iii. 9 f., iv. 4-7, v. 1). The question arises whether this being begotten of God is the presupposition or the consequence of faith. When it is said in 1 John v. 1, "Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God," this being begotten of God must be thought of as the presupposition, not as the consequence, of faith, for otherwise we should have expected the present tense to be used, instead of the perfect (*γεγέννηται*). And when in iv. 6 we find "He who is not of God does not hear us," that means that only those who are of God—and that is those who are begotten of God (verse 7), the children of God—are capable of receiving in faith the word of the Christian preacher; faith is not here the condition but the consequence and manifestation of a presupposed sonship to God. With this agree the passages, referred to above, where there is mention of those children of God who are now scattered throughout the world, but who are to be brought by Christ into the unity of the Church (xi. 52), and whose becoming

believers is in like manner a consequence of their presupposed sonship to God; or of those who are not of the world, but were the Father's possession and have been given by Him to the Son to have as His own, and who therefore have believingly received and kept His word (xvii. 6-16); or of those other sheep who do not belong to this fold (Judaism) but are now Christ's possession, and therefore hear His voice and will come to be gathered in by Him (x. 16), while in the same passage (verse 25) it is said of the Jews that they do not believe in Christ because they are not His sheep, or because they are not of God but of the devil (viii. 47). These passages all point in the same direction; but there are a few on the other side, where faith, or baptism, seems to be the condition and means of being begotten of God or of the Spirit. Whether i. 12 f. is to be reckoned among these is doubtful. The relative clause in verse 13, "who were begotten, not of blood nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," may be understood as the fuller explanation of the whole of the previous clause "He gave them the right to become the children of God, as those who [because they] believe on his name": so that faith would be here the condition of being born of God or being the child of God. But if, on the contrary, the relative clause (verse 13) is referred merely to the immediately preceding words, "who believe in his name," then it contains the fuller explanation of what faith is, or how men come to it, namely, by being begotten of God. And this, again, may be understood either in the sense that the being begotten of God preceded the faith in point of time and was the cause of a condition of natural relation-

ship to God whereby faith was made possible (so Hilgenfeld), or in the sense that the being begotten of God coincides in point of time with the arising of faith; so that faith is the higher life produced in men by the Divine influence. This last interpretation, according to which faith is itself the Divinely produced new life of sonship to God, seems to me the simplest and best.<sup>1</sup> It agrees with the saying in vi. 29, where faith is called the work of God, and with vi. 44 f. and 65, according to which coming to Christ is the result of an inward drawing, teaching, and giving on the part of God. This view, that the Divinely-begotten life of sonship to God begins in, and with, faith, admits of being reconciled with the passages previously cited, according to which there are children of God, even among non-Christians, in the sense that this natural relationship to God may be thought of as only a potential, germinal sonship to God, which needs to be raised by the revelation of Christ and the inward influence of the Divine Spirit to real faith, and so to the conscious and vigorous life of God's children. The natural predisposition of those who are "of God," "of the truth," does not therefore do away with the necessity for a new birth from above and from the Spirit; it is only the preparation for it, the condition of receptivity for it. This *new* birth must take place *from above* (both ideas are implied in (ἀνωθεν γεννηθῆναι, iii. 3), because the natural man born of the flesh is only flesh, not Spirit (iii. 6); his personal life is determined by the lower, un-Divine, impulses of

<sup>1</sup> So also Reuss, Beyschlag, Rothe, Biedermann. Cf. on the whole question Holtzmann's discussion in his commentary, and in *N. Tle. Theol.*, ii. pp. 471 and 486.

nature. In order to become Spirit—that is to say, a being determined by the impulses of the Spirit who can exercise spiritual influence upon others (vii. 38 f.)—he needs a transformation, a new birth, which can only be brought about by an immediate operation of the spiritual power which comes from above, from God. This transformation takes the form of faith in Christ and in Him who sent Him, for the believer is the man who is begotten of God, and has passed over from death into life (v. 24).

## THE JOHANNINE THEOLOGY

### CHAPTER XIV

#### THE SACRAMENTS. ESCHATOLOGY

IT is quite in accordance with ancient methods of thought that the inner revolution which takes place within the Spirit is associated with a definite outward act, in which the inward act is both symbolised and mystically mediated: this is baptism, which is therefore spoken of in iii. 5 as a being born of water and Spirit. That in this passage baptism is meant, ought never to have been doubted. What else could be meant by the mention of water in conjunction with Spirit, if it were not intended to indicate the water of baptism as the means of the re-birth from the Spirit? Is not baptism in the deutero-Pauline epistles also a bath of re-birth (Tit. iii. 5), a bath of purification and sanctification for the Church (Eph. v. 26 f.)? The contradiction which our analytic thought is accustomed to find between the nature of an inner spiritual process and its mediation through an outward sensible act, has for ancient thought in general, and the period of the Mysteries in particular, no existence. Instead, we may say that our difficulties on this point would have been quite unintelligible to the men of that time, for it appeared to them self-

evident that a real inward experience must also be visibly represented by a corresponding outward event, and that just in this mystic interplay of inward and outward consisted the significance of all cultus-ceremonies. In practice, this mysticism only becomes an objectionable magic when the outward act and sensuous means is thought of by itself as the compelling cause of the inner events. And that was by no means John's meaning. It is true that in iii. 5 he places the water, as the obvious, visible token, before the Spirit; but that he regarded the Spirit as nevertheless the essential operative force is unmistakably evident in what follows (verses 6, 8), "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," "The wind bloweth whither it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is begotten of the Spirit." Here the being begotten by the Spirit is spoken of as something not only so mysterious, but so unaccountable, so unconfined by any form or rule, that we are justified in concluding that the Evangelist wished to guard against a pedantic confining of the operation of the Spirit to the baptismal act. But why, then, did he nevertheless couple together baptism and the Spirit? Simply, we may say, because baptism was already established as a cultus-act in the Church, and re-birth was generally thought of as associated with it. To adopt this Church conception and fit it with his own view of faith, birth from the Spirit and sonship to God, was a duty which the Church teacher could not neglect—the less so as in the various Schools of Jewish Gnosticism (Disciples of John, Ebionites and Elkesaites) frequently repeated religious lustrations were held to be magically efficacious means



of salvation, for the healing of both body and soul. This Gnostic superstition could not be better combated than by fixing the idea of Church baptism as the means (xiii. 10) of re-birth from the Spirit which purifies once for all, while at the same time all emphasis was laid upon the point that it is the Spirit who begets the life, and that He does it when and how He will.

The same applies to the discourse about the other Church Mystery, the Lord's Supper. In connection with the miracle of the loaves, the Evangelist puts into the mouth of Jesus a skilfully-planned discourse (chapter vi.) which aims at justifying the existing celebration of the Lord's Supper and the Church's view of its saving power from the standpoint of his own doctrine of Christ, while at the same time purifying it from the misunderstanding which treated it as magical. The starting-point is the thought, based on Philo (M. i. 484, 499) that the true heavenly bread, of which the manna in the wilderness was merely a shadowy image, is the Christ who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (verse 33 ff.). He Himself is the bread of life (*i.e.* which contains and bestows life), and has come down from heaven with the very purpose that men should eat of Him and thereby appropriate to themselves a life which will never die (verses 47-51a). So far the thought is simply that the appropriation effected by faith (verse 47), of what Christ is and gives, confers the possession of eternal life. At this point, however, the thought turns more definitely in the direction of the sacramental feast, verse 51b: "And the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (*i.e.* which serves as a means of life

for the world—the same thought is more clearly expressed in the various reading, “and the bread which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” In both versions it is not a question of Christ’s flesh being surrendered to death, but of the offering of it as the spiritual food of humanity, which is to draw its life thence). The offence which the Jews take at this saying finally gives occasion to the most definite and unmistakable reference to the sacramental partaking of the Lord’s Supper: “Truly I say unto you, unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him” (verses 53–56). It is impossible to express more clearly than in these words the thought that in the Lord’s Supper there is a real partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ, and that this partaking is the necessary means of maintaining the mystical union with Christ (our abiding in Him, and His “abiding in us”), and thereby gaining possession of eternal life, which includes within itself the pledge of a future resurrection. In answer to the offence which this discourse aroused in many hearers, Christ goes on to say (verse 61 ff.), “Does this offend you? How then if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” This seems to stand in such striking contradiction with what was said just before about eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of

Man that it is no wonder that many have held verses 51-59 to be a later "Church" interpolation into the Johannine text, while others have at least thought it necessary to interpret these verses in the light of verse 63, *i.e.* as a metaphorical description of the spiritual appropriation of Christ by faith. Both suggestions are, indeed, wholly arbitrary and inadmissible, but they are based on the just perception that it is the Evangelist's own real opinion which finds expression in verse 63. But, if so, why has he previously asserted in such strong and unambiguous language the sacramental eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Christ, and described it as the indispensable means to eternal life? We answer, for the same reason that he previously added to the birth from the Spirit that from water—because he could not and might not pass over the Mysteries which were so deeply rooted in the worship and faith of the Church. Not in the sense that a mere outward accommodation to the opinion of the majority determined his course, but that our Evangelist, for all his Hellenistic culture, was too much the child of his time and environment not to consider the doctrine of the Mysteries an important and indispensable part of his Christianity. In this respect he was quite in accord with the convictions of the Church teachers of his time, especially Ignatius and Justin. To them the real presence and reception of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper appeared the more important, because they believed themselves to possess in that a palpable proof and pledge of the reality of the body of Jesus Christ, which was disputed by the Gnostics. An additional motive was the religious need which the Christians shared with the members

of the numerous Mystery and cultus associations of the heathen—that of placing themselves, by partaking of a consecrated food, in a kind of corporeal union with the Saviour-God, the bestower and guarantor of the blessed life beyond the grave. When Ignatius calls the bread of the Lord's Supper a magic drug producing immortality and an antidote against death (*Ad Eph.*, xx. 2; cf. *Ad Smyrn.*, vii. 1) he is only expressing the conception which prevailed generally in the Mysteries of the power of the sacred meal to guarantee life. We may recall especially the Dionysiac Mysteries, in which the Bacchantes believed that by partaking of the flesh and blood of the sacrificial animal they secured to themselves the immortal Divine life which it contained. The Evangelist is in vi. 51–59 exactly following the lines of the terminology current in connection with the Mysteries of his time; the flesh and blood of Christ is for him a hendiadys for the Divine-human life which in Christ's person is given to the world as a means of spiritual sustenance, *i.e.* as a means to eternal life. There is no reference in the words to the death of Christ and its expiatory power; this Pauline interpretation of the Lord's Supper is as foreign to John as to the *Didache* and Justin. The allusion in verse 62 to the departure of the Son of Man to heaven is merely intended to make the partaking of the flesh of Christ at the Lord's Supper conceivable, in the sense that since the exaltation of Christ His Divine-human life is no longer present in earthly, crude material flesh and blood; its place is taken by the glorified corporeity (δόξα) of the heavenly beings, which can unite with the earthly elements of the Lord's Supper in a mysterious *unio mystica*, and does ever anew so unite itself, as formerly

the Logos or Spirit united itself with the human body of Jesus in a personal union. This incorporation of the Logos in the earthly Jesus finds its continuation in the presence of the spiritualised flesh and blood of the exalted Son of Man in the elements of the Lord's Supper. This was the way in which Justin (*Apol.*, I. lxvi.) thought of the matter, and this is the line of thought to which John evidently alludes in verse 62 f. It is in this sense that he continues in verse 63, "The spirit is that which gives life; the flesh profits nothing," *i.e.* it is not the earthly flesh of Christ which is present in the Lord's Supper—that could not be a means of life—but just as it was the Spirit which reanimated the body of Christ at the resurrection and transfigured it to heavenly glory, so in the Lord's Supper also it is ultimately nothing but this life-giving power of the Spirit of Christ which is to be appropriated. This appropriation is, however, mediated by the partaking of the elements with which the spiritualised life of the heavenly Son of Man enters into mysterious union. Here, just as in the reference to baptism in iii. 6–8, it is the Spirit which is the last word of the Evangelist, but the Spirit in His cultus-mediation through sensible *media*. Similarly the author of the First Epistle says in v. 6, "It is the Spirit that witnesses, for the Spirit is the truth," but alongside of the Spirit stand as fellow-witnesses the water and the blood, by which Jesus Christ has come, in His baptism and His death, as the Son of God, and by which at the baptism of Christians and the partaking of His blood at the Lord's Supper He again and again spiritually comes anew, that is, makes Himself known as the delivering and world-conquering Saviour-God. Thus the sacramental doctrine

of John can find a place, without inconsistency, in the framework of his Church-Gnostic theology, if only we do not make it more spiritual (in the modern sense) than it really was, or, in the circumstances of its time, could be. The Johannine doctrine of the Sacraments<sup>1</sup> is in precisely the same case as his demand for belief without sight, for which nevertheless visible miracles form the indispensable presupposition. The spiritual is no doubt for him always the essential, the main thing, but the sensible medium must never

<sup>1</sup> The unfavourable estimate of the Pauline-Johannine doctrine of the sacraments which has lately become fashionable seems to me to lack historical justification, for it overlooks the following facts: (1) That, on the testimony of the History of Religion, no popular religion can subsist without sacramental ceremonies, and we have therefore no right to assume that Christianity could have done so. (2) That enthusiasm was not imported into Christianity by the sacraments, but lies at its foundation from the first. (3) That the primitive Christian form of enthusiasm was the apocalyptic, revolutionary hope of the earthly Messianic kingdom, which was incompatible with any organised social condition, and therefore must necessarily have undergone some transformation in the interests of the existence of Christianity as a Church. (4) That this transformation, to which Paul pointed the way, necessarily followed the lines of the contemporary Mystery-religions, and therefore was bound to lead to Christian Mysteries. (5) That these Christian Mysteries, for all their affinity of form with the heathen Mysteries, were nevertheless essentially distinct from them in content, because under the sensible externals the presence of the life-giving and healing Spirit of Christ was always believed in and felt. (6) That the blessing of the perfecting of life through union with God which was sought in the Mysteries, in spite of its transcendental form, has proved itself in historical experience to be the most potent motive for the overcoming of the world and the ethical moulding of the world. (7) That it is therefore a faulty argument, a hysteron-proteron, when our modern mode of thought is made the standard of judgment for the earliest stages of Christian development, of which it is in fact itself the ultimate result.

be omitted, and is in fact the more strongly emphasised the more highly the spiritual aim and result which are to be attained thereby are estimated. This peculiarity is, however, shared by John with the whole Hellenistic movement, the spiritualism of which, as is well known—take, for example the Book of Wisdom and Philo—always went hand in hand with a very material belief in miracle. With the exception of baptism and the Lord's Supper there is no reference to any Church ceremonies, for the forgiveness of sins can hardly be regarded as such, since, being attached to the possession of the Spirit (xx. 23), it is a matter for all Christians endowed with the Spirit, not only for the organised Church or a definite ecclesiastical office. Even in connection with baptism and the Supper, Church fellowship takes quite a subordinate position as compared with the mystical aspect of the individual Christian's birth from the Spirit and union with Christ. So also the unity of the Church, which in the parting prayer of Christ is represented as the final purpose of its vocation, is thought of only as the ideal unity of the Spirit, consisting in the mystic union of believers with Christ and God and their brotherly love towards one another (xvii. 21 ff.; *cf.* Eph. iv. 3 ff.), not as any outward form of society or organisation. That is the essential distinction between the mystical theology of this Hellenist and the practical ecclesiastical tendency of the Ignatian and Pastoral Epistles. For John, all peripheral questions of the life of the Church as an organised society disappear behind the central question of religion, the relation of the individual heart to God and Christ.

Even the questions regarding the future to which

the Christian hope looks, are for him of subordinate importance as compared with the immediate presence of eternal life, consisting in the knowledge of God and His Son, and the indwelling of both in the loving souls of believers.

The question of the return of Christ (xiv. 18 ff., xvi. 16 ff.) is skilfully treated, sometimes in the form that it has already been fulfilled in the appearances of the risen Christ, sometimes that it is being continuously fulfilled in the fact that Christ and the Father come and make their abode with every man who loves Christ and keeps His commandments (xiv. 23). The expectation of a visible return of the heavenly Christ to set up His Kingdom upon earth ("Chiliasm") is in John definitely abandoned; its place is taken, partly by the Church's consciousness of the spiritual presence of Christ in the hearts of believers, partly by the hope that the souls of the righteous will after death be taken home by Christ and will thenceforth be with Him in heaven, in the many dwellings which He has prepared for them in His Father's house, where they shall behold and share His glory, as partakers in the mystic union of love between Himself and His Father (xiv. 2 ff., xvii. 24 ff.). This Hellenistic hope of a heavenly blessedness of the righteous as individuals would seem to leave no room for the earlier conceptions of a bodily resurrection and judgment. But near as John comes in isolated sayings to the adoption of this logical consequence, which was actually drawn by the Gnostics, he has not really carried it through, but has placed the traditional eschatology alongside the Hellenistic doctrine of immortality without making



any attempt to reconcile them. On the one side we find: "He that believeth hath eternal life and cometh not into the judgment, but is passed from death into life"; "He that believeth is not judged, but he that believeth not is judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. He that believeth, though he die yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth shall never die, to all eternity" (v. 24, iii. 18, xi. 25 f.). Therefore the life which the believer already as such possesses in the present is wholly untouched by death; it is in itself so indestructible that death has for the believer no more significance, and does not therefore need to be subsequently overcome by a resurrection. But, on the other hand, the very incident of the raising of Lazarus, on the occasion of which these last words were spoken, proves that the expectation of a future bodily resurrection is meant to hold its ground. And there are several unambiguous utterances which point in the same direction. It is true that the saying in v. 25, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they who have heard shall live," is clothed in a perhaps intentionally ambiguous form, since the actual presence of the hour seems to point to the spiritual awakening of the spiritually dead; but, on the other hand, the statement which follows is unmistakably eschatological in meaning: "The hour cometh in which all who are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment" (v. 28 f.). According to this, there is still a judgment beyond the grave, at least for the wicked, although it seemed

in iii. 18 that the judgment consisted exclusively in the process of separation which takes place in this life between the friends and foes of the light which has been manifested in Christ. In xii. 48 and vi. 39 f., 54, there is also mention of a judgment and a resurrection "at the last day." To interpret all these unambiguous passages in the spiritual sense would be just as arbitrary as it would be to explain them as later interpolations. We ought rather to recognise that just this unreconciled collocation of the traditional eschatological conceptions with the Hellenistic Gnostic mode of thought, which moved on a much higher plane, is pre-eminently characteristic of the author's tendency to mediate between Gnosticism and orthodox Church belief. He has everywhere adopted what is sound in the Gnostic-Hellenistic idealism, but has endeavoured to combine it with the faith of the Church in such a way that the connection with the primitive Christian tradition is maintained and the religious requirements of the general body of the members of the Church are not forgotten. Thus we may liken him to the householder who "brings forth out of his treasury things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52).

POPULAR CHURCH ("CATHOLIC") WRITINGS OF  
AN EDIFYING CHARACTER

CHAPTER XV

THE EPISTLES OF PETER AND JUDE. THE  
"APOCALYPSE OF PETER"

THE writing which has come down to us under the title of the First Epistle of Peter is an edifying homily cast into the form of a letter. Its purpose is to exhort and strengthen its readers to bear patiently the sufferings which have come upon them because of their Christian confession, and to walk worthy of their Christian name both towards those who are within and those who are without, the exhortation being reinforced by pointing them to the blessed end of their hope and the example of the sufferings of Christ. This glorious end of their hope, and the way which leads thither through suffering and obedience, are the two poles round which this hortatory and consolatory treatise revolves, with many repetitions and without a definite order of thought, but with a constantly maintained warmth of simple emotional appeal. Along with this, many dogmatic ideas of the Pauline theology, especially from the Epistle to the Romans, are touched on, but always in such a way that they are turned to practical hortatory

account. The dogmatic interest is in this homily quite subordinated to the ethical, and indeed only comes into view in so far as the religious system of thought and the religious hope serve as a support for the Christian ethical conduct of life. It was therefore a mistake of the earlier Tübingen criticism to regard First Peter as a "tendency" writing, designed to reconcile the opposition which arose in early Apostolic days between Paul and Peter, between Gentile and Jewish Christians. This letter of consolation and edification has nothing whatever to do with that opposition; the old controversies about law and faith, the call of the heathen and the special claims of the Jews, lie behind it and below its horizon. Its significance for the history of the development of early Christianity lies rather in the fact that it is a typical expression of the common consciousness of the Church of the second century, and shows clearly how the Apostle Paul was at that time understood and applied, how the characteristic corners and edges of his theology were rounded off, and the general ethico-religious motive-power of it was brought into prominence as its permanently valuable content. Without special peculiarities of its own, this Epistle is a valuable document for the average consciousness of the Church of its time.

One point that is specially characteristic in this connection is the literary relationship of First Peter to the Pauline and deuterio-Pauline Epistles. It was long ago noticed that thoughts and expressions from the Epistle to the Romans are constantly hovering before the author's mind, and serve him as models; it is indeed so obvious that no doubt on the point is possible. There are, in fact, among the numerous

parallels several of such a kind that an expression which in the Epistle of Peter is unnatural and unintelligible, only becomes intelligible on comparison with the Pauline original.<sup>1</sup> The author also shows acquaintance with other Pauline Epistles, so that we must assume that he had before him a whole collection of them. Whether the deutero-Pauline Epistle to the Ephesians was among them, or whether the latter is dependent on First Peter, is a disputed point. The Epistle to the Hebrews was also known and used by our author, and probably also the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the Epistle of James is more likely to be dependent on First Peter than conversely; and the affinity with the Lucan writings is rather to be explained by a common ecclesiastical linguistic background than by direct dependence on the one side or the other. The author's theological way of thinking is also very much the same popularised Paulinism which we find in the Lucan writings. At its centre stands the death of Christ, which delivers both from guilt and sin; Christ the righteous has suffered for the unrighteous in order to bring us near to God (iii. 18); He carried up our sins in His own body to the tree (cross), that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, and by His wounds we are healed (ii. 24)—a turn of expression based on Isa. liii. and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Pet. i. 14 with Rom. xii. 2; ii. 2 with Rom. xii. 1 and 1 Cor. iii. 2; ii. 6-8 with Rom. ix. 32 ff. (quotations from Isa. xxviii. 16 and viii. 13); ii. 13 with Rom. xiii. 1 ff.; ii. 24b with Rom. vi. 2, 11, 18; iii. 18 with Rom. vi. 10, v. 2, and viii. 10; iv. 1 f. with Rom. vi. 6 f.; iv. 6 with Rom. viii. 10 f.; iv. 8 ff. with Rom. xii. 3-13.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 1 Pet. i. 2 with Heb. xii. 24; ii. 24 with Heb. ix. 28; i. 18 f. with Heb. ix. 14; ii. 5, 9 with Apoc. i. 6; i. 7 with Apoc. iii. 18.

Heb. ix. 28, which expresses the thought that Christ took our guilt upon Himself and made atonement for it upon the cross, as on an altar, by His sacrifice of expiation, but in doing so has also laid on us the obligation to renounce sin. This latter aspect, the moral influence of the sacrificial death of Christ as a pattern for our imitation, is much more prominent than the propitiatory or guilt-cancelling effect of it. The blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish, has redeemed those who before were heathen from their vain (worthless) way of life (i. 18); He has given us an example that we may follow in His footsteps (ii. 21). The faith of Christians is, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, principally hope directed to the glory of Christ and His followers which is to be revealed in the future. Since this hope is founded upon the certainty that Christ, through His resurrection, has been exalted to the right hand of God, the resurrection itself forms the fundamental means by which God, according to His mercy, has begotten us again to a lively hope (i. 3); and since the proclamation of the Gospel awakens this hope, Christians are said to be born again of incorruptible seed, that is, through the living and abiding word of God (i. 23). The proof of believing hope is obedience (i. 14), which glorifies God by worthy conduct, by the doing of that which is good in all the circumstances of life, especially by patience in suffering, according to the will of God (ii. 9-20, iii. 13-iv. 19), and by fervent brotherly love, which also covers a multitude of sins (i. 22, iv. 8). The specifically Pauline ideas of justification by faith, emancipation from the law, death to the flesh and life in the spirit, are absent from this popularised Paulinism. Even where the characteristic

expressions of the Apostle are touched on, they receive a new interpretation in an ethical sense (*cf.*, *e.g.*, what is said about baptism in iii. 21 with Rom. vi. 2, and iv. 1, suffering in the flesh causes cessation from sin, with what is said in Rom. vi. 6 ff. about the mystical dying of the sinful body in baptism). For all that, the consciousness of the exalted greatness of Christianity, of the glory of the Gospel promises and of the greatness of the tasks and obligations of the new people of God, is expressed quite as vigorously and in some cases in a more generally intelligible fashion than by Paul. As peculiar to First Peter we may mention the doctrine of Christ's descent to Hades in order to preach to the spirits in prison (iii. 19), and that of the inspiration of the prophets by the Spirit of the pre-existent Christ (i. 11 f.).

That the author of First Peter was not the Apostle Peter is proved beyond doubt by his dependence on Paul on the one hand, and on the other by the absence of any trace of reminiscence of personal intercourse with Jesus as His disciple. How could the "Apostle of the Circumcision," whose last meeting with Paul had been the sharp contention at Antioch, have come to be his disciple and copy his letters? And how could the Galilæan fisherman, who, according to tradition, needed Mark as an interpreter in Greek-speaking regions, have come to write an Epistle in good Greek and to quote the Old Testament only from the Septuagint? How is it conceivable that the Apostle Peter, the disciple of Jesus, could have forgotten or suppressed all his personal reminiscences of the Master and His teaching in order to adopt instead the Pauline theology? Is it to be supposed that Paul had made a stronger impression

upon him than Jesus? But the absence of personal reminiscences would become even more unintelligible if we were to suppose the Epistle of Peter to have been written before the Pauline Epistles, in order to reverse the relation of dependence as between Peter and Paul.

This hypothesis, as Jülicher justly remarks, does not call for serious refutation, "because Paul's originality lies quite beyond doubt, because the circumstances implied in First Peter are inconceivable at that early period, and because the dogma that all New Testament writings must be genuine cannot supply the place of historical arguments." But if the First "Epistle of Peter" cannot really be derived from Peter, how came it to bear his name? Is it possible that it first existed as an anonymous homily and was afterwards made into an Epistle of Peter by the addition of the introduction and conclusion? This hypothesis was brought forward at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Cludius (*Uransichten des Christentums*, 1808), and quite lately has been revived by Harnack. It certainly has in its favour the fact that Polycarp, who made use of the Epistle, does not speak of it as Petrine, whereas he mentions Paul (though not in connection with quotations); and the further fact that it is absent from the Muratorian Canon, and is first mentioned by name in the writings of Tertullian and Irenæus. But if the Epistle had so long existed anonymously without the introduction and conclusion (according to Harnack, from the time of Domitian to the middle of the second century), it is very strange that it has not been preserved in any MS. in this original form. Moreover, the address, "To the Sojourners of the



Diaspora in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (i. 1) would be more difficult to understand as a later interpolation than as derived from the author of the whole, who had been moved to write this letter of consolation by the persecution which was just at that time raging in Asia Minor, and who would be more likely than a later writer to compare Christians with the Jews living in the foreign world of the Diaspora.<sup>1</sup> And, finally, the author's description of himself in v. 1 as a "witness of the sufferings of Christ" would also have to be supposed to have been added by a later hand, since these words are certainly intended to mean an eye-witness of the sufferings of Jesus. But in spite of all this I will not dispute the possibility of the hypothesis in question; it might well serve to fall back on if we had no other pseudonymous letters in the New Testament. But as we undoubtedly have several (2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Timothy, Titus, Second Peter, Jude), and as we also know how innocent the pseudonymity of such writings was considered at that period, I do not see why we should here have recourse to more artificial expedients, instead of simply assuming that our Epistle was originally written and put in circulation under the name of Peter. The author has chosen this form for his treatise, not with the purpose of bringing about a union of Pauline and Petrine, or

<sup>1</sup> It is only in that sense, not as referring to Jewish Christians—the letter everywhere implies Gentile Christians—that the words of the address, ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς Πόντου, κ.τ.λ., can be understood. Christians are the "dwellers abroad," *i.e.* strangers or pilgrims upon earth, who in the heathen world are as far from their heavenly home, and feel themselves as strange to their surroundings, as the Jews who lived far from their Palestinian home in the Diaspora. *Cf.* ii. 11 with Heb. xi. 13, Eph. ii. 19.

Jewish, Christians—a theory to which the Epistle gives no support—but because, next to Paul, in whose name he did not venture to write, Peter's was the apostolic name most venerated in the West, and in the Roman Church was already beginning to be the watchword of Apostolic Church authority. It may be left an open question whether the letter was really written from Rome, or whether the greeting in v. 13, from “her that is elect with you in Babylon,” *i.e.* the Church at Rome, belongs only to the form in which it is clothed; the latter is to be assumed with reference to the mention of Silvanus, the missionary helper of Paul, and of Mark, the traditional companion of Peter.

The time of composition may be inferred from the implied circumstances of the churches to which it is addressed. They are exposed to official persecution because they bear the name of Christians, and for that reason the author exhorts them earnestly to honourable conduct which shall be blameless even in the eyes of the authorities, that they may give the heathen world no other ground of accusation against them than that of their Christian confession (ii. 12 ff., iii. 9, 16 f.; iv. 14 f.). Now, persecutions of Christians by process of law had indeed not seldom occurred from the time of Domitian onwards, but these trials on the score of religious belief were first legally regulated by Trajan, from 112 A.D. onwards,<sup>1</sup> and, moreover, especially for the province of Asia, where Pliny was at that time governor. He had occasioned

<sup>1</sup> Another thing that suggests Trajan's time is the use of the word ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος (iv. 15) = *delator*. Trajan had threatened to punish these *delatores* or denunciators as criminals, as Pliny mentions in his honour.

the issue of the Emperor's edict by putting the question whether the Christian name as such, when no other crime was alleged, was a ground of punishment, or only crimes associated with the name. In view of these considerations it may be assumed that First Peter was written in the second decade of the second century, not later, for there is no reference to any Gnostic false teachers, and there is no mention of any bishop above the presbyters. But no doubt the warning to the presbyters against avarice and lording it over the Church (v. 2 f.) shows that the time was approaching when ecclesiastical office began to consolidate its powers and so to present attractions to avarice and ambition.

The Epistle which introduces itself as coming from Jude the servant of Christ and brother of James, contains a brief but vigorous condemnation of certain false teachers, who may be recognised at first sight as Gnostics of an extreme libertine school. They deny God, "the sole Ruler," and the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 4). The former statement doubtless means that they did not recognise the Creator-God of the Old Testament as the true God of the Christians, but degraded Him to a demonic Demiurge; the latter, that they either, like the Ignatian Docetists, denied the true humanity of Christ, or, like the dualists of 1 John ii. 22, separated the man Jesus from Christ the Son of God, and therefore, in either case, denied the incarnation of the Son of God. When it is further said in verse 8 that they reject "lordship" (*κυριότης*) and speak evil of "glories" (*δόξαι*), we may understand by this their rejection of the Divine government of the world and

their contemptuous irreverence for the sacred powers, whether of the higher world (angels) or the earthly world (authorities). This perverse way of thought found expression, moreover, in gross immorality, especially in sexual aberrations and all kinds of unbridled sensuality, with which they even polluted the holy love-feasts of the Church (verses 8, 10, 12). And that this immorality was closely connected with their Gnosticism, that it was held by them to be justified by it, and in a sense to be a proof of their state of grace and possession of the Spirit, may be inferred from verse 4, "they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness," and verse 8, "their dreamers [on the ground of their dreams or fantastic beliefs] defile the flesh," and verse 16, "These are murmurers, who complain of fate and walk after their own lusts, and their mouth speaks lofty things, while they flatter men to their faces for the sake of gain"; and finally, verse 19, "these are they who cause divisions," "soulish" men,<sup>1</sup> who have no spirit, where the last remark seems intended to retort upon the heretics their assertion that they were the true "spiritual" Christians in contrast with the ordinary members of the Church, who are mere "psychics."

All these characteristics apply exactly to the Gnostic sect of the Carpocratians, which, about 140 A.D., was founded by the Alexandrian Carpocrates and Epiphanes (father and son), to whom indeed

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* having the animal soul (*psyche*), which presides over the senses, but not the higher spirit (*pneuma*), which is conversant with heavenly things. The German "seelisch" being a derivational equivalent, it seems best to imitate it, as the suggestion of immorality in A.V. and R.V., "sensual," is not directly in view.

Clement of Alexandria regarded the polemic of the Epistle of Jude as having a prophetic reference (*Strom.*, III. ii. 11). According to his graphic description, Epiphanes in his book on *Righteousness* declared property and the family to be arbitrary human institutions, and universal equality and freedom in the form of community of goods and wives to be alone in accordance with the Divine righteousness. Since God Himself has implanted the sexual impulse in man, the command not to covet one's neighbour's wife is absurd. This "whoremonger's righteousness," as Clement calls it, was practised by them at their love-feasts, at which they combined carousings with promiscuous unchastity. And they carried their shameless impudence so far as to speak of Aphrodite Pandemos as "mystic fellowship," and to assert that the celebration of this "mystery" was the way to the kingdom of God (III. ii. 27). In the same connection Clement mentions the Gnostic sect of one Prodicus, who declared themselves to be the sons of the first God, and availed themselves of the freedom of sonship to give free course to their lusts. Clement gives an excellent general summary of the two divergent tendencies of Gnostic Dualism by remarking (III. v. 40) that while some of them taught indifferentism (*ἀδιαφόρως ζῆν*), others, like Marcion, from an impious contempt for the creation, practised an exaggerated asceticism.

There could, of course, be no question of a theoretical refutation of extravagances such as these. Our author contents himself with vigorous threatenings of the Divine judgment, appealing to examples from Old Testament history and apocryphal legend. He recalls the judgment upon the unbelieving

Israelites in the wilderness (verse 5), Sodom and Gomorrah (verse 7), Cain, Balaam, and Korah (verse 11), and also the judgment upon the fallen angels, which is spoken of in the Book of Enoch (verse 6), and the contention of the archangel Michael with the devil over the body of Moses (verse 9), following a legend which, according to Origen, was contained in the apocryphal book *The Assumption of Moses*; finally he expressly cites (verse 14 f.) a passage from the Book of Enoch (i. 9), in which the coming of God with myriads of the saints to hold judgment upon the ungodly is announced. In addition, he reminds his Christian readers of the words which were spoken beforehand by the Apostles of our Lord about the "mockers who should appear in the last time, walking after their ungodly lusts" (verse 17 f.), where he perhaps has in view passages from the Pastoral letters such as 2 Tim. iv. 3, iii. 1 f.; 1 Tim. iv. 1. And just as in the Pastoral Epistles the traditional Church belief is opposed to the false teaching, so here Jude exhorts his readers to fight for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to build themselves up upon their most holy faith (verses 3, 20). The brief Epistle closes with a doxology which recalls the (spurious) conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans.

That the Epistle can scarcely have been written before the middle of the second century is evident from its relation to false doctrine and to the Pastoral Epistles. Why the author should have chosen as pseudonym the name of Jude, the brother of James (this must mean James the brother of Jesus, the famous head of the Jerusalem Church), we cannot tell. In such cases the determining factor may

often have been local tradition or legend, of which the knowledge has been lost. Probably the author was an Alexandrian Hellenist, for it was from Alexandria that the heresy of the Carpocratians originated; and among the Hellenists there the Jewish apocryphal literature, to which belong the Book of Enoch and The Assumption of Moses, were held in special honour.

The first trace of the Epistle of Jude is found in Second Peter, where the attack on the false teachers in ii. 1-iii. 3 is nothing else than an extended paraphrase of the Epistle of Jude. And the paraphrase is not very successful. The pregnant terseness, the poetic sweep, and the transparent clearness of the original, have in the expanded copy been flattened out and weakened down, and in places obscured to the point of unintelligibility. For example, ii. 11 can only be understood from Jude 9; ii. 12, the comparison of the false teachers with brute beasts, is taken from Jude 10 but with a misinterpretation of the image there used; in ii. 17 the obscure comparison of the false teachers with "clouds driven about by the storm-wind, for which the blackness of darkness is reserved," can only be explained as a mixture of the two distinct images in Jude 12 f., "waterless clouds driven about by the wind," and "wandering stars for which the blackness of darkness is reserved"; in iii. 2 the "words spoken by the apostles beforehand" of Jude 17 are expanded into "the words spoken beforehand by the prophets and the commandment given to the apostles by the Lord," *i.e.* the sum of the prophetic-apostolic teaching in general, and nevertheless the more limited reference of these

words in the original passage to the prediction regarding the false teachers is retained in iii. 3. Between ii. 17 and 18 the quotation from Enoch in Jude 14 f. is omitted, because the author, holding a stricter conception of canonicity, avoids direct quotation from the apocryphal literature, although in verses 4, 10 and 11 he has reproduced conceptions derived from the same source.

If in view of what we have seen it cannot be doubted that Second Peter combats the same libertine Gnostics as the Epistle of Jude, there is another feature of it which, while doubtless not inappropriate to this heresy, certainly does not refer to it alone but to an opinion which was current in wider circles in the second half of the second century: "The scoffers say, where is the promise of His parousia? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the world" (iii. 3 f.). He reminds these doubters that the delay of the promised Parousia does not signify that it will never come, for with God, after all, a thousand years are as one day, and the delay is due to His long-suffering patience, and is for their sakes, because God does not desire that anyone should be lost, but that all should turn to repentance. But certainly, the world which of old arose at the command of God out of the water, as it was once destroyed by the Flood, so now it is reserved for the fire of judgment. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements of the world will melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all things in it will be burnt up. But after this burning-up of the world, we expect, according to His promise, "new heavens and a new



earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (iii. 10 ff.). This doctrine of the destruction of the world by fire is first found in the Jewish Sibylline Oracles, and is without doubt derived from the Heracleitic-Stoic theory of a periodically recurring conflagration, and is, like the fires of purgatory, to be regarded as a borrowing from ancient natural philosophy.

To the fine-spun fables of the false teachers our author opposes as the decisive authority the Apostles' knowledge, resting on the testimony of their own eyes, of the glory of Christ (i. 16). This he exemplifies from the incident of the transfiguration, which forms the prototype of the future Parousia. He gives the voice from heaven according to the version of Matthew (i. 17 = Matt. xvii. 5). He also knows the Gospel of John with its appended chapter, for i. 14 is obviously an allusion to John xxi. 19. And when, after mentioning the Transfiguration, he goes on in i. 19: "And we have as something *more sure* (*βεβαιότερον*) the prophetic word, to which you do well to take heed as to a light shining in a dark place," the question arises whether this comparative means that the Old Testament prophecy is a surer authority, standing even above the Gospels, or whether it only means that the prophetic word has the more certainty for us because it is confirmed by the facts of the Gospel history. While not asserting the impossibility of the latter interpretation, I cannot help considering the former more natural and probable. Strange as this preference for the Prophets as compared with the Gospels may seem to us, from the point of view of the Early Church it has nothing extraordinary about it, for to it the Gospels were not yet the inspired word of God, whereas inspiration in the fullest sense was

ascribed to the Old Testament writers, as our author shows just after by saying that no prophecy has its own solution, *i.e.* explanation, since it was not produced by the will of man, but, "moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God" (i. 20 ff.). The prophets were therefore so exclusively the mouthpieces of God that they were not even able themselves to give the explanation of their own prophecy: how much less is it possible for other men to explain it from their own resources without the illumination of the Holy Spirit? This is the strongly supernaturalistic theory of inspiration which the Church early adopted; it had long been current in Hellenism, and has its ultimate roots in the dualistic metaphysics and psychology of the latter. In iii. 2, "the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets" are coupled with "the commandment of your apostles from the Lord and Saviour." Here we already have, therefore, the whole Christian canon with its two parts, the Old Testament and the New, but the apostolic word is put alongside of the prophetic, not as being of equal rank with it on the ground of resting, like it, on direct inspiration, but only because it contains the historical evidence of the "commandment," *i.e.* the rule of faith and life which the Divine Lord and Saviour has Himself revealed. It is on that ground, of course, that prescriptive authority is ascribed to the Gospels, as the historical records of the Lord's commands, in a much higher measure than to the apostolic letters. This our Evangelist clearly shows by the peculiar way in which he speaks in iii. 15 f. of Paul and his Epistles, of which he already had a complete collection before him. He assures his readers that, in the same spirit he in which exhorts

them, so also "our beloved brother Paul" has written to them according to the wisdom granted to him, and in all his letters had expressed his mind about these things; no doubt there were in these letters many things hard to be understood, which, like the other (sacred) scriptures, are wrested by the ignorant and unstable to their own destruction. The sense of this passage was misunderstood when it was proposed to find in it the terms of peace between Jewish Christianity and Paulinism. The circumstances of these early apostolic parties are quite remote from our letter, which is exclusively concerned with the great antithesis of its own time, the struggle of the Church Catholic with the Gnostic heresy. But since Gnostics of various Schools, Marcionites as well as libertines, were especially fond of appealing to Paul, it was quite natural that the Church teachers should endeavour to wrest this weapon from their adversaries. This might be effected either by directly attacking, in the name of Paul, this heretical ultra-Paulinism, as is done in the Pastoral Epistles, or, again, by bringing the Catholic consciousness into the field, under the Roman watchword of Peter's name, and thereby showing the agreement of this Church faith with the teaching of Paul as rightly understood. This served the purpose of discrediting the use made of the Pauline letters by the opposing party as an unjustifiable abuse of them, as a misunderstanding and perversion of the true meaning of Paul. But, withal, it is impossible not to recognise in the whole tone of our passage, in the cool acknowledgment of the wisdom granted to Brother Paul, which nevertheless need not prevent his letters from containing many things hard to be understood, evidence of the

rather embarrassing position in which Church teachers felt themselves placed by the appeal of the heretics to Paul.

That the author of Second Peter, who copied the Epistle of Jude, which is directed against the Carpocratians, and had before him a collection of the Pauline letters, was not the Apostle Peter, is self-evident; and the obvious premeditation with which he seeks to represent himself as this apostle and eye-witness of the Gospel history in no way decreases the impossibility of its genuineness. The date of composition of this letter, which is no doubt the latest among the New Testament writings, must be placed rather far on in the second half of the second century. Whether the author was a member of the Roman Church, to which the use of the ægis of Peter's name might seem to point, or to the Egyptian, as is suggested by its relation to the Epistle of Jude, I leave an open question.

The Early Church reckoned among the Catholic writings the Apocalypse of Peter. Clement of Alexandria gave an exposition of it among the Catholic epistles in his *Hypotyposes*, and in the Muratonian Canon it is placed beside the Apocalypse of John as a book received by the Church, though contested by many. Until recent times only a few sayings were known from it, but lately a considerable fragment, comprising nearly the half of the original document, has been discovered, together with the Gospel of Peter (vol. iii. p. 214 f.) in a grave at Akhmim (Egypt), and has been edited by Bouriant (1892). Harnack published the text of this fragment, with a commentary, in the *Proceedings of the Berlin*

*Academy of Sciences* (xliv., 1892). What follows is based on these publications.

This Apocalypse contains revelations about the condition of the righteous and of sinners after death, supposed to be given by Jesus to His twelve disciples, in particular to Peter—who here, as in the Gospel of Peter, is the spokesman for the rest—“on the mountain” (Luke vi. 12?). First there came two of the blessed, radiant as the sun, and of indescribable beauty. Then the abode of the blessed is shown; there is a wide space outside this (earthly) world radiant with light, and the earth itself is blooming with unfading flowers and filled with blessed fruits. The dwellers in this abode are clothed with the garments of angels of light, and, surrounded by the angels, with one accord and with exceeding joy they praise God the Lord. Then the Lord (Jesus) gave the disciples the explanation, “That is the abode of your high priests, the righteous.” Here the perfected righteous in general, as in the *Didache* (xiii. 3), the prophets in particular, are described as the high priests of the earthly Church, since they intercede with God on its behalf, a statement which in the New Testament is only applied to Christ (Rom. viii. 34, 1 John ii. 1, Heb. vii. 24 ff.).

On this description of the abode of the blessed follows that of its antithesis, the place of punishment, which is waste and gloomy, presided over by an angel of punishment wearing a dark garment. I will spare the reader the description of the refinements of torture which are inflicted on the various classes of sinners; it suffices to say that these torture-fantasies are derived from the teaching associated with the Orphic Mysteries (which in turn was perhaps in-

fluenced by Buddhist pictures of hell), and that they form the basis for the description of the inferno in Dante's *Divina Comœdia*. Noteworthy, however, for the history of Christian ethics is the enumeration of the various classes of gross sinners: (1) The blasphemers of the way of righteousness, *i.e.* impious despisers of (the Christian) religion. (2) Perverters of righteousness, *i.e.* false teachers. (3) Adulteresses and adulterers (the former put first as the more guilty). (4) Murderers and their accomplices. (5) Women who have conceived by irregular unions and practised abortion. (6) The persecutors and betrayers of the righteous (*i.e.* instigators of legal persecutions of Christians). (7) Blasphemers and slanderers of the way of righteousness (*i.e.* as distinguished from (1), the false accusers and witnesses on such trials of Christians). (8) False witnesses, *i.e.* liars and calumniators in general. (9) The proud and hard-hearted rich, who have shown no pity to widows and orphans. (10) Moneylenders and usurers. (11) Men who have practised unnatural lust (*paiderastia*), and women who have done the like ("Lesbian vice"; *cf.* Rom. i. 26 f.). (12) Idol-makers. (13) Apostates who have left the way of God, *i.e.* abandoned Christianity.

The religious standpoint of this apocalypse is Jewish-Christian and scarcely differs from that of the Jewish Apocalypse of Enoch. Christians are spoken of as "the righteous," only once (verse 3) as "believers," and Christianity is "the way of righteousness." Ethical motives are exclusively based on the requital beyond the grave. And with ethical transgressions are associated as the cause of future destruction "false doctrine," the "perversion" of religion by "false prophecy" and "all kinds of dogmas" (verses 1 and 23).

In this the Apocalypse has points of contact with the anti-Gnostic polemic of the Pastoral Epistles (*cf.* verse 23 with Tit. i. 14). On the other hand, the identification of the believers with the hungry and thirsty and oppressed (verse 3), and the severe condemnation of the unmerciful and usurious rich (verse 30 f.) shows the continuance of the socialistic tendency of primitive Christianity which we found illustrated in the Johannine Apocalypse, and shall also find in the "Shepherd" of Hermas and the Epistle of James. With both these the Apocalypse of Peter stands in the closest inner relationship, and is doubtless also of very nearly the same date. It is, like the "Shepherd," essentially a call to repentance clothed in apocalyptic form.

## POPULAR CHURCH WRITINGS OF AN EDIFYING CHARACTER

### CHAPTER XVI

#### THE "SHEPHERD" OF HERMAS

IN the Muratorian Canon this writing is placed immediately after the Apocalypse of Peter, with the remark "The 'Shepherd' was written quite lately (*nuperrime*) in our own times at Rome by Hermas, while his brother Pius occupied the episcopal chair of the church at Rome.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore to be read (*privatim*) but not used publicly in the worship of the Church, either among the prophets or the apostles." The treatise was highly esteemed both in the Eastern and the Western Church; by Clement of Alexandria and Origen it is frequently cited as a sacred writing, and though Eusebius reckons it among the antilegomena which are to be excluded from the Canon, it seems nevertheless still to have been used in catechetical instruction in the time of Athanasius.

The book consists of three parts: (1) Five Visions; (2) Twelve Commandments; (3) Ten Similitudes.

<sup>1</sup> The contents of the treatise are so fully in accord with this indication of time (140-155 A.D.) that there is no sufficient ground for questioning its correctness.



The first four visions form an independent section, and are certainly the basis of the whole. The fifth vision forms the transition and introduction to the second main division, which, again, forms a unity consisting of the Commandments (*Mandata*) and the first eight Similitudes (*Similitudines*), while the ninth similitude is a re-working of the material of the third vision, and the tenth forms the close of the whole. Some critics have held that there were such profound differences between the various parts that they felt obliged to assume either two, or three, different authors and an editor. But this is a mistake; language and tone of thought are so homogeneous throughout that the whole can only be the work of a single author. It was, however, no doubt not written all at once and according to a plan conceived beforehand; the various parts probably arose as independent portions at various times, and were only gathered together at the end, before publication, and united by artificial links, such as are clearly to be discovered in *Vis.* v. 5 and *Simil.* ix. 1.<sup>1</sup>

How the author came to write his prophetic visions and later exhortations to repentance may be conjectured with much probability from the first two visions. His experience was similar to that of the prophet Hosea, nearly a thousand years before. As the latter, by the experience of domestic misery (his wife's unfaithfulness) and the hope of recompense, was

<sup>1</sup> The unity of authorship was proved by Baumgärtner and Link (1888-9), and had before that been accepted by Zahn and Harnack. Unity of plan is suggested by Link and Stahl (*Patrist. Untersuchungen*, 1901). That the different parts originated at different times is assumed by Baumgärtner and by Harnack (*Chronologie*, p. 263 ff.).

made into a prophet of judgment and repentance but also of consolation and salvation for his people, so Hermas was made a preacher of repentance and forgiveness to the Church of his time because the unhappiness of his own home, the sins of his badly-brought-up sons, the bitter tongue of his wife and the decay of his fortunes, pressed upon his heart and called his own guilt, his sins of thought and of neglect in former days, to his remembrance. From this mood of deep dejection and self-condemnation he was awakened to new hope by the appearance of the Church in the form of an old woman who revealed to him that although God was indeed angry with him for bringing up his children badly, nevertheless through God's mercy all the past evil of his house would again be set right if he would only take courage and not fail to urge his children to repentance by a daily righteous word, which has power over all wickedness as the smith has over the iron that has been made soft in the fire. Then she read to him out of a book which at the beginning was terrible to hear, but afterwards wholesome and pleasant (*Vis.* i. 3 f.), for it contained the revelation that God would forgive all sins hitherto committed if the sinners repented with their whole hearts; but for further sins after the set day (of this announcement) there would be no more deliverance, for the days of repentance have a limit for all saints (Christians); it is only for the heathen that they continue until the Day of Judgment. This revelation he is to communicate to his household and those who are set over the church as a warning against future sin and a consolation in view of past sins, and, moreover, he is to be no longer angry with his family, for

they are about to be purified by righteous discipline from their former sins, just as he also will be saved because he has not departed from the living God, but has continued in integrity and abstinence, and as all are saved who do righteousness, for the Lord is nigh to those who turn to Him (*Vis.* ii. 2 f.).

On the occasion of another appearance the Church gave the command to make two copies of this little book, to which she is now about to add something further (*Vis.* iii. and iv.), and to send one copy to Clement and one to Grapte. "Clement will send it to other cities, for that is permitted to him, and Grapte shall instruct the widows and orphans. But thou shalt read it aloud in this city (Rome) with the presbyters who are set over the church" (ii. 4).

So far the historical introduction to the visions which follow. What the last part of it means has been much debated. Some see in it a fiction by means of which the author, in the manner customary in apocalypses (Enoch, Ezra, Baruch, and the rest), seeks to place his revelation under the authority of a famous name of earlier times, viz. that of Clement, the author of the Letter to the Corinthians. On this hypothesis this is what is designed in the explanation, "for that is committed to him" (*ἐπιτέτραπται*), which has to be understood of a regularly constituted office held by Clement. But this is not necessarily the sense of the word, which rather suggests a permission than an official duty. And if this had been the intention of the author, would he not have emphasised the authority of Clement more strongly than by this passing notice? But, on general grounds, the assumption of a fiction of this kind is not in accordance with the way in which the author has hitherto

explained his prophetic mission as due to personal experiences, for that these were not invented, but were actual experiences, seems to me beyond doubt. But why explain them in this way if, after all, he was not going to publish his revelation in his own name, but under an assumed personality? The Jewish apocalyptists were in the habit of doing that, because among those for whom they wrote, a revelation through contemporary prophets was not believed in; but in the Christian community, where prophecy was a living force in the present, every reason for cloaking the prophet of the present under the personality of some authority of earlier times disappeared. Others, while discarding the hypothesis of a fiction, have wished to retain the view that the reference in this passage is to the well-known author of the Epistle of Clement, and consequently have found themselves obliged to date back either the whole work, or at the least its earlier part, the Visions, to so early a period that it would be separated by several decades from the date of publication given in the Muratorian Canon. I cannot hold this hypothesis to be probable either. Why should we be compelled to identify the Clement of Hermas, who was obviously not a church official, with the earlier well-known Clement who was a Roman presbyter? The name Clement was as common in Rome as the name John in Asia Minor, and it is therefore quite arbitrary if theologians, every time that a name of this kind occurs, feel obliged to think of the one person who by a habitual association of ideas is most closely identified with this name in their imagination. If we give up this prejudice due to custom, nothing hinders us from assuming that the Clement of *Vis.* ii. 4

was a different person from the Roman presbyter, a layman with whom Hermas was on friendly terms, to whom he wished to do honour, as also to his friend Grapte, by choosing them to be the intermediaries in making his revelation more widely known.<sup>1</sup>

The third vision is introduced by a decision of the Lady Ecclesia on a disputed point of ecclesiastical precedence. Hermas wished to give way to the presbyters, but is directed to take his seat first. According to this the prophet is still superior to the regular church officials, but even the prophet is preceded by the martyrs, for the highest place, on the right hand, is reserved for them, and they receive special honour. After this question of Church etiquette had been disposed of, Lady Ecclesia raised her magic wand and caused Hermas to see the vision of a tower which was being built, the interpretation of which she then gave at his request, an interpretation which would give joy to some, sorrow to others, but even to these last would in the end bring joy, if they immediately repented. The tower signifies the Church. It is built upon the water, because the salvation of Christians rests upon the water of baptism. The builders are the six archangels, the first created beings, to whom God has entrusted the administration of the whole creation. The stones differ in form and colour and usefulness. They signify twelve different classes of mankind. (1) The apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons, whether already fallen asleep, or still alive; these form the foundation of the Church. (2) The martyrs who

<sup>1</sup> I here agree with the view which Harnack earlier (1877) proposed, in his edition of Hermas (*Patr. Apost. Opera*, iii. 28 f.), against his later view (1897) in the *Chronologie*, p. 265.

have suffered for the Lord's sake. (3) The righteous who have been tested in this life. (4) Those new to the faith, who as yet are imperfect, and must be admonished by the angels to do good. (5) Penitent sinners, who may yet become serviceable building-stones if they repent in time, so long as the building is unfinished. (6) Hypocrites who are full of wickedness, and therefore are cast away by the Master-builder to a distance from the tower. (7) Apostates who have known the truth but have not continued in it, and have not held to the fellowship of the saints, and therefore are unserviceable. (8) The contentious, who are the cause of schisms in the Church. (9) The unpurified, who are divided between righteousness and wrong-doing, especially the rich who have faith but cling to their riches and for their sake fall away in the time of trial. (10) Doubters who have left the way of truth, and because they cannot find a better way, wander into desolate ways. (11) Hardened worldlings, into whose mind it has never entered to repent. (12) The vacillating, who were half inclined to become Christians, but were deterred by the ethical demands of the truth and fell back into their own sinful ways. Hermas asks what becomes of those stones that are cast away; whether they shall still find repentance and a place in this tower? and receives the answer that they cannot be put into this tower, but only elsewhere in a much humbler one, and that only when they have suffered torment and fulfilled the days of their sin and repented of their evil deeds. (The possibility of salvation in the other world, with a lower degree of blessedness, therefore still remains open to those who by putting off their repentance have lost the opportunity of being received into the

saving fellowship of the Church.) Hermas next sees, round about the tower, seven women, by whom the tower is supported according to the commandment of the Lord. (This curious conception betrays that it is not a picture really seen in this form, but an artificially constructed allegory.) These women stand for the seven virtues, viz. Faith, by whom the elect of God are saved, and then the daughters of Faith (*Pistis*); Continnence, Knowledge, Simplicity, Guilelessness, Purity, and Love. He who serves these virtues and holds fast to their works shall have his dwelling in the tower with the angels of God. He then asks when the building will be finished, and receives the answer: the building is still going on, but when it is finished the end shall come; and it will soon be finished. This exhortation must suffice to refresh the spirits of the saints. Hermas then adds an urgent warning to the rich, in view of the imminence of the end, to use their means in doing good, and another to those who are set over the Church and occupy the seats of honour, to purify their hearts from the venom of party spirit; for how can they instruct the elect of God if they do not discipline themselves and have peace with one another? Finally, Hermas asks what it means that the Lady Ecclesia first appeared to him as a quite old woman, then in a younger form, and at her last appearance as a young, beautiful, and cheerful woman? He receives the answer that this typifies three conditions of the Christian life—a flagging condition, consequent on being stifled with earthly cares, then the refreshment of its spirit through the receiving of this revelation, and finally the renewal and strengthening of men's spirits to good, brought about by a sincere repentance.

In the fourth vision Hermas sees a horrible monster coming towards him, but does not allow himself to be shaken in his trust in God either by the fire which it vomits or by its fearful roaring, and therefore goes past it in safety. Then the Church again appears to him and reveals to him that this beast is a figure for the trial that is at hand, which is to be surmounted by purity of heart and life and undoubting faith. She also interprets to him the four colours on the head of the beast. The black signifies the present world; the fiery and blood-red points to the destruction of the world by fire and blood; the gold signifies that the Christians who have been tested and purified by the fire of affliction have escaped from this world; finally, the white represents the future world in which the elect of God shall live for ever, pure and spotless. With the exhortation to keep in mind that which has been described to him before it came to pass, the Lady Ecclesia leaves the seer. Afterwards, at his own home, after having prayed, he saw a new vision, the fifth. A man clothed in the garb of a shepherd, glorious in appearance, comes to him, and explains to him that he has been sent by the most holy angel to abide with him all his life long. Thereupon he changed his appearance, and Hermas recognised that it was he to whom he had been committed as his guide and "angel of repentance." The angel then told him that he had been sent to show him once more all that he had already beheld, the chief things—that is to say, those which serve to salvation. Accordingly he is first to write down the Commands and Similitudes and afterwards other things as he (the angel of repentance) shall show him (v. 5). That forms the introduction



to the second part of the book, which now follows, the Commands and Similitudes, which stand in no direct connection with the preceding Visions. The prophet Hermas, who received his revelations from the Spirit of the Church, now gives place to the preacher of morals, who is taught by the Shepherd, or Angel of Repentance.

The twelve Commands (*ἐντολαί, mandata*) contain a system of morality intended for the instruction of the Church, on a basis of motive which is distinctly religious, though of an Old Testament rather than a New Testament character. The first Command inculcates belief in the one sole God, who has made all things out of nothing. There is no trace of a mediating function of the Logos—which would be hardly possible in a Church teacher if he had known the Fourth Gospel. The second Command prescribes simplicity in speech (as against scandal-mongering), and in giving, in which the giver is not to ask whether the recipient is worthy. The third Command required truthfulness, and on hearing it Hermas makes the remarkable confession that he has hitherto never spoken a true word—doubtless a hyperbolic expression of humility, which is, nevertheless, not without psychological interest in an apocalypticist who is freely following his imagination. The fourth Command requires chastity of heart and life. The question of Hermas, whether an adulterer is to be forgiven if he repents, is answered by the angel of repentance in the affirmative. Thereupon Hermas remarks that he has heard it said by some teachers that no further repentance was possible after that at baptism, where we receive the forgiveness of former sins. The angel of repentance answers that

strictly this is the case, but that God in His mercy, knowing the weakness of men and the subtlety of the devil, has permitted a second repentance, and has committed to him (the angel of repentance) authority to grant it. If, therefore, anyone after that great and holy calling (Baptism) is tempted by the devil and commits a sin, there remains for him yet one more opportunity of repentance; but if he continues in sin, repentance will not avail to save him. Hermas thus takes a middle path between the stern rigorism which already had some representatives in his time, and was later raised by the Montanists to a principle, which would not admit any possibility of repentance for the baptized or any forgiveness for gross sins, and the laxer view which held repentance and forgiveness to be always possible, without limitations. His view was milder than that of the Montanists but stricter than the later practice of the Church, which, however, only carried his principles to their logical conclusion, so that we can quite understand the animosity of Tertullian, as a Montanist, against the "Shepherd."<sup>1</sup> At the close of this Command the question of second marriage is raised. The angel of repentance declares it to be permissible but not advisable, since the renunciation of it earns special honour and great glory from the Lord. The fifth Command deals with long-suffering; the sixth contrasts the angels of righteousness and of iniquity and their influence upon

<sup>1</sup> Tert., *De Pudicit.*, x., xx. With the above compare the explanation of the relation of the "Shepherd" to Montanism in Lipsius' Essay (*Zeitschr. f. n. Theol.*, 1866, Heft i., esp. p. 36 ff.). I agree, however, with the remark of Harnack (*Patr. Ap.*, iii. 83) that the relation is not so close as Lipsius would make it—if only because of the difference of date.

a man; the seventh shows how the fear of God is the only power which can deliver us from the fear of the devil; the eighth gives a catalogue of vices and virtues; the ninth exhorts to unwavering firmness of faith, which alone can hope for answer to prayer; and the tenth to a joyful and cheerful frame of mind, since sadness (faint-hearted despondency) is one of the most dangerous enemies of the servants of God. In the eleventh Command the prophet of lies is contrasted with the true prophet, and the characteristics of each are described. By their life and conduct may be recognised the Divine Spirit of the one and the devilish spirit of the other. The true prophet is humble and unassuming, free from worldly desires, does not speak in answer to idle questions, but only when the Spirit moves him, especially in the assembly of the faithful for worship. The false prophet, on the contrary, is arrogant, ambitious, insolent, a chatterer and gormandiser, takes payment for his prophecies, avoids the assemblies of the Church, attaches himself to doubters, talks to them in corners the kind of empty folly that they desire, but is dumb in the meeting of the church. It is clear that this is not a satire upon church officials, but that what Hermas here describes is something between a heretical hedge-preacher and a magic-monger. The twelfth Command requires the overcoming of every evil desire by delight in good and the fear of God. At the close the question is raised whether these Commands are not too difficult to be possible of fulfilment. The angel of repentance answers angrily to this doubting question: Shall man, whom God has made the free lord of all His creatures, not be able to become lord even of these Commands? He will easily be able to

keep them if he has the Lord not only on his lips but in his heart, and is not afraid of the power of the devil, who can get no hold upon men whose hearts are full of faith, that is, of fear of God and trust in God. With this fine saying the teacher of morals returns to his starting-point. His ethic is based upon a foundation of earnest piety, and aims at purity of heart and life. In so far it is, in spite of its legal form, thoroughly evangelical in content; in any case widely removed from the Jewish servitude to the letter and ceremonial worship.

The eight "Parables" (*παραβολαί, similitudines*) to which ix. and x. are attached as a kind of appendix, contain pious reflections, partly suggested by accidental observations of daily life, which shape themselves, in the ingenious imagination of Hermas, into images of spiritual truths, the description of which displays, for all its simplicity of form, a certain poetic gift. The first Similitude compares the Christian to a man who is living at a distance from his home, in a foreign city, to the laws of which he cannot submit without being unfaithful to the laws of his own country, and therefore never knows when he will have to leave the foreign city. Therefore being thus in exile he ought not to seek to gain more wealth than is necessary to life, that he may be always ready to take his departure with a light heart. Instead of buying lands and costly houses he ought to free distressed souls from their troubles, receive the widow and the orphan, and make such outlay as will be to his advantage when he returns to his home.

The relation of the poor to the rich is set forth in the next Similitude under the figure of the vine which climbs upon the elm. As this unfruitful tree, by

the support and moisture which it affords the vine, increases the fruitfulness of the latter, so the rich, who in consequence of their worldly cares are poor in spiritual possessions, should support the poor by their wealth, in order that the latter may be grateful to the rich and help them by their intercessory prayers, which have great power with God. So they help one another mutually, each with the gift which he has received from the Lord, rightly to fulfil the service of the Lord. The third and fourth Similitudes illustrate from the trees, which in winter all alike appear barren, but in summer show the difference between barren and fruitful, the thought that the distinction between the righteous and sinners, while it is not outwardly to be recognised in this world, will nevertheless be revealed in the future.

The fifth Similitude is suggested by a fable, and is designed to show how the truly religious man can do something more, beyond what is commanded. To illustrate this the following allegory is used. A master commanded his servant to bind the vines in his vineyard to stakes, promising him his liberty as a reward. The servant not only did what he had been commanded to do, but also cleared the vineyard of weeds. Greatly rejoiced at this, the master declared to his friends and his son that, to reward this excellent servant for his meritorious service, he will raise him to be fellow-heir with his son. Then he sent the servant some meats from his own table. The servant, however, kept only what was necessary for himself and divided the rest among his fellow-servants. This worthy deed finally confirmed the master and his friends in the resolve to make the servant fellow-heir with the son. From this allegory is drawn the

moral that before all things a man should keep the commandments of the Lord, but whosoever does something more, in addition to what is commanded, shall win for himself special honour with God. It is a higher service of this kind when a man, after he has done what is prescribed for him (including the customary fast), devotes the sum saved by his abstinence to making glad the widows and orphans and the poor. A fast so performed is an acceptable sacrifice to God. Here we already have unmistakably the idea of works that go beyond what is obligatory and are therefore meritorious (*opera supererogativa*), and consequently at least a hint of a dual morality such as is characteristic of Catholic moral teaching. It may be admitted, however, that the distinction between the specially meritorious service and the prescribed duty is not so clearly marked in the application as in the allegory, and only amounts to a distinction in the degree of service, since, after all, beneficence is one of the universal Christian duties. This allegory, in addition to its moral, has also a dogmatic significance (and perhaps was originally composed more especially with this purpose, and only afterwards given a moral in addition). The master of the vineyard is God, the master's son is the Holy Spirit, the servant is the (historical) Son of God, Jesus Christ, the vines are the people of God, the stakes are the holy angels, who are the co-rulers of the people of God, the weeds in the vineyard are the sins of the people, the meats sent to the servant are the commandments which God has sent to His people by His Son, the friends and counsellors of the master are the first-created holy angels. The services performed by the Son (the servant) consisted first in

the appointment of the angels as guardians of the people (this was what was commanded to begin with), next in the laborious cleansing of the people from their sins, and finally, in the communication to them of the law received from the Father (these last two being the meritorious services). The appointment of the servant as fellow-heir with the son in reward for these services is interpreted as follows: God caused the pre-existing Holy Spirit who had made the whole creation to take up its abode in a flesh<sup>1</sup> which He chose. This flesh, then, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt (*i.e.* Jesus) served the Spirit worthily, walking in holiness and purity, never in any way defiling the Spirit. Since, therefore, its conduct was so good and pure, and it toiled and laboured with the Spirit in every work stoutly and manfully, He (God) took it to be the partaker (fellow-heir) with the Holy Spirit. For God was well pleased with this flesh, because it was not defiled upon the earth while it was in possession of the Holy Spirit. Therefore He took counsel with His Son (the Holy Spirit) and the highest angels, with the purpose that the flesh also, which had served the Spirit blamelessly, might receive a place to dwell in<sup>2</sup> and not remain without reward. For every flesh shall receive reward that is found pure and spotless, in which the Holy Spirit has dwelt. From this it appears that Hermas' view of the Person of Christ is as follows. He was originally, as the man Jesus, only a servant of God like other men, but was exalted to be the Son of God because (1) the eternal Son or Holy Spirit dwelt in Him (permanently); and (2), He never grieved this Spirit but worked with Him,

<sup>1</sup> *In einem Fleische* (ἐἰς σάρκα).—TRANSLATOR.

<sup>2</sup> τόπον τινὰ κατασκηνώσεως; *cf.* Luke ix. 48.—TRANSLATOR.

rendering spontaneous meritorious services, and thereby earning a share in the status and rights of the eternal Son. This theory stands in the closest relationship with that which is combated in the First Epistle of John—the separation made by the Gnostics between the heavenly Son of God and the man Jesus, who served that Heavenly Spirit as His earthly abode. But whereas in the Gnostic doctrine this union is again dissolved and the man Jesus never becomes the Son of God, in Hermas not only is the union with the Son of God maintained by the ethical relation of Jesus with Him, but it is intensified to the point of a partaking in His Sonship. In the latter respect this Christology is Adoptionist, but in the former it is docetic in the milder sense associated with the Basilidean and Cerinthian dualism. After the Logos Christology had once come into being, a doctrine of Christ's Person such as Hermas offers us would no longer have been permissible for a church teacher; but before that it certainly did not cause offence to anyone, for it satisfied two interests at the same time—the desire to see in Jesus the appearing of a Divine being, and the desire to see in Him the human pattern of conduct for Christians. In the latter direction the doctrine receives several applications in this Similitude. The meritorious works of the servant, on account of which he is exalted to the sonship, set an example for the works of pious Christians which go beyond what is commanded and merit especial honour from God (iii. 2 ff.). And the stainless purity of Christ imposes on Christians the duty of the same sanctification of the flesh and of the Spirit, and excludes the view that this flesh, because it is corruptible, may be abused by being



subjected to defilement (vii. 2 f.), a view which in certain Gnostic circles was adopted as a logical inference from their dualistic doctrine.

The sixth and seventh Similitudes show, under the figure of a neglected herd of sheep, how those Christians who have become engrossed in the pursuit of worldly pleasures and have gone astray are delivered over to the angel of punishment in order that by many afflictions they may be made to come to themselves and repent. That is exactly what had happened to Hermas and his household, and it will bring about their salvation, if he bears the affliction with patience.

The eighth Similitude develops at wearisome length the image of the willow-tree, the twigs of which are distributed to the men who gather under its shadow. Of these twigs some remained quite fresh, others became half dried up, but could be revived by being watered, while others were quite withered. The willow-tree denotes the law of God, which in the preaching of the Son of God is communicated to all men. The varying conditions of the twigs symbolise the different classes of good and bad Christians. The most perfect class of these, who are allowed to go into the tower adorned with victors' crowns, is composed of the martyrs, who have suffered for the sake of the law (of Christ), iii. 6. The worst class are the apostates, traitors, and slanderers who fall a prey to destruction once for all; next to them come the hypocrites who introduce strange doctrine and lead the servants of God astray, not suffering sinners to repent but seducing them with their foolish doctrines (vi. 4 f.). Many of these have already repented since they have heard the commands

of the angel of repentance, and in the case of others there is at least ground for hope.

The ninth Similitude is marked by its introduction as a later addition. It begins: "After I had written the Commands and Similitudes of the Shepherd, the Angel of repentance, he came to me and said, I will show you all that the Holy Spirit has shown thee, who spoke with thee in the form of the Church; that Spirit is the Son of God." Because of the weakness of his flesh at the beginning, Hermas had received that revelation about the building of the tower from the female figure of the Church; but now that he has been strengthened by the Spirit, he is to be instructed in all things more exactly by the angel who has been assigned to him by the "glorious angel" (? the Son of God) as a guardian spirit. That is obviously "a hint of the way in which the visions are to be understood, which comes very near to being a correction. The ninth Similitude is a partly correcting, partly elaborating, repetition of the third" (Harnack). Hermas is taken by the angel to Arcadia, and from the summit of a mountain he sees a great plain, and round about it twelve mountains of different shapes. In the midst of the plain there rose a great white rock, higher than the mountains, and so large that it could contain the whole earth. The rock itself was old, but had in it a gate newly hewn out, from which shone forth a splendour brighter than the sun. Beside the gate stood twelve virgins of stately form, and girded as for work. Then there came six tall and stately men, who called a number of other men to them and commanded them to build a tower over the rock and the gate; the stones to build with were brought to them by the virgins. First the square white stones

brought up out of the deep are laid down as the foundation of the tower, and on them are placed twenty-five more, then thirty-five, then forty, all brought up out of the deep. Then after a pause there were brought from the surrounding mountains stones of various kinds and values. But before the tower was completed the building of it was interrupted, and a man came forth whose height overtopped the tower, and who was solemnly saluted by the six master-builders and the twelve virgins. He inspected the tower minutely, testing every single stone. Those of doubtful soundness he ordered to be removed and replaced by new stones dug out of the plain. Then he directed the Shepherd to purify carefully all the stones that had been rejected from the building and, so far as they proved fit for use, to employ them in the building of the tower, but those that were quite unserviceable he was to cast away to a distance. This is done, and then the Shepherd withdraws for a short time. This pause is occupied by a pastoral interlude between Hermas and the twelve virgins—a Christian version of the legend of Apollo and the Muses, or of Krishna and the shepherdesses, or the like. Then the Shepherd returns and begins the interpretation of the whole scene. The rock and the gate are the Son of God, who on the one hand is older than all creation, since He was the Father's counsellor at creation, and on the other hand is young, since it is only in these last times that He has been manifested (Heb. i. 1), namely, in Jesus. As the stones could only be brought in through the gate into the building, so no one can enter into the Kingdom of God otherwise than through the Son alone. Even the six highest angels (the master-builders in the

allegory) only come to God through the Son, at whose side they stood when He came in the guise of the tall and splendid man to examine the tower. The tower built upon the rock and gate is the Church. The virgins are holy spiritual powers of the Son of God; those who seek to enter the Kingdom of God must receive a garment from them, otherwise it is no use, even if they bear the name of the Son (*cf.* the wedding garment in the parable, Matt. xxii. 12). Many of those who have already been in the tower have put off the garment of these holy virgins and put on the black garment of the temptresses, the she-devils, and have therefore been cast out of the house of God. But even they can be received back again if they give up the works of the demon women and accept the power of the holy virgins and walk in their works. For that was the very reason why a pause was made in the building, in order that these (rejected ones) might yet find a place in the building. But if they do not repent, then others will take their places and they will be finally rejected. It is for the very purpose of bringing us to repentance that God has sent His angel of repentance to us sinners, and by his revelation (of the possibility of a restoration of sinners through repentance) has refreshed our Spirit and renewed our life by the hope of forgiveness. The names of the twelve holy virgins are Faith, Contineness, Power, Long-suffering, Simplicity, Guilelessness, Chastity, Cheerfulness, Truthfulness, Understanding, Concord, Love; those of the black-clad devil-women are Unbelief, Intemperance, Disobedience, Deceit, Despondency, Wickedness, Lasciviousness, Choler, Falsehood, Folly, Slander, Hatred. Finally, as regards the stones which are used for the

building of the tower, the first ten and twenty-five are interpreted as meaning the first and second generation of righteous men (Adam to Noah and Noah to David; *cf.* Luke iii. 31 ff.); the following thirty-five are the prophets and servants of God, the forty are the "apostles and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God." The fact that all these stones are brought up out of the deep signifies that they all, in order to attain unto life, must have passed through the waters of baptism; even those who have in time past (before the coming of Christ) fallen asleep, have received the seal of the Son of God (baptism), and have thereby put away their condition of death and received life. To this end the apostles and teachers who have fallen asleep in the faith of the Son of God have preached to those who had fallen asleep in times past, and given them the seal. The twelve mountains of the parable are the nations who inhabit the world. They are different in form because the mental temper of the nations is different, but through faith in the name of the Son of God and through His seal they have received one mind, one faith, one love; therefore the whole tower had only one resplendent colour. As the tower, after it had been purged of the bad stones, seemed as though hewn out of one stone, so the Church, after it has been purged of the bad, the hypocrites and blasphemers, will be one body, one mind and spirit, one faith, one love. Further on (chapter xix. ff.) the stones from the twelve mountains, which have here been interpreted as meaning the different nations, are referred to the different classes of men within the Church, in this way reverting to the idea of the third vision. The explanation is, as regards the details, a free variation of what we find there.

Noteworthy is the description in chapter xxii. of the people who are, indeed, believing, but who are hard to teach, insolent, self-satisfied, professing to know everything and really knowing nothing, who pride themselves on being wise and set up to be teachers while they are really foolish, men who in their self-exaltation have become vain. Some of them, it is true, have repented and submitted to the men of understanding; to the others repentance still remains open, for they have never been bad, but only wanting in understanding, and foolish. This doubtless refers to the Schools of the Gnostics Valentinus and Marcion, who, about the middle of the second century, in consequence of their religious zeal and (in the case of the Marcionites at least) their ethical strictness, enjoyed a certain respect in the eyes of the orthodox believers at Rome.<sup>1</sup> In chapter xxvi. certain deacons are accused of having administered their office badly, and wasted or appropriated to themselves the portion of the widows and orphans. For those who have denied and withdrawn themselves from the Church the possibility of repentance is admitted, but with the proviso that they must hasten to repent before the building of the tower is finished, and that in case of further denial after this there will be no further possibility of deliverance—a repetition, therefore, of the thought of *Vis.* iii., that only one opportunity of repentance before the approaching end will be permitted to Christians. The same warning

<sup>1</sup> That Hermas knew these Gnostics, who since the fifth decade of the century had become numerous in Rome, is not to be doubted, on the evidence of the above passage compared with *Simil.* viii. 6 and v. 7, although he does not explicitly attack their doctrines. It was not the business of a prophet and unlearned layman to do so.

also forms the close of the tenth Similitude, where the Shepherd once more sums up his exhortations to Hermas as follows: "Do ye therefore good works, as many as have received of the Lord, lest while you delay, the building of the tower be finished—for it was for your sakes that it was interrupted. Unless you hasten to do right, it will be finished and you will be shut out."

The great difference which some have found between this last Similitude and what precedes is not evident to me. The whole is equally pervaded with the same thought. Hermas announces as a revelation communicated to him by the angel that God is willing to forgive all who earnestly repent, and to receive them into His kingdom, but there is great need for haste, because the period appointed for repentance is strictly limited, and the end with its final decision is at hand. There is certainly a difference in the fact that in *Vis.* iii. the tower denotes the ideal Church, into which only the pure and penitent enter, while others do not belong to it, whereas in the ninth Similitude the tower denotes the empirical Church, within the borders of which there are also bad Christians, who, however, are again excluded by the Master-builder, in order that when they have been purified they may be inserted into the edifice, which will only then be completed. But this difference must not be exaggerated, for even in *Vis.* iii. the Church appears as a weak and elderly woman, which is interpreted as a reference to its having become worldly, and that must mean the empirical Church with its actual defects; and on the other hand, even in *Sim.* ix. the Church is essentially only the fellowship of those who not only bear the

name of the Son of God, but are also clothed in the garment of the holy virgins, that is, adorned with the Christian virtues; while those who have exchanged this garment for that of the dark temptresses, *i.e.* have fallen into unchristian vices, are here, *ipso facto*, excluded from the house of God, and can only gain entrance to it again by a complete reversal of their conduct. In both cases, therefore, the mixed, imperfect Church of the present is in a provisional, transitory condition not corresponding to its idea, and soon to come to an end, in order that the Church may then be in reality that which according to its essential nature it ought to be, a single strongly-constructed building in which only pure and faultless stones should find a place. That is, in principle, no doubt the same view of the Church on which Montanism and Novatianism were based; but whereas they desired to see this principle realised immediately, and therefore uncompromisingly rejected the impure Church of the present, Hermas, the preacher of repentance, is too much of a practical Roman to wish to put his ideal without more ado in the place of the existing reality. He therefore compromises between the two, in the sense that he allows the impure actuality of the Church to stand for the present, and is content to expect the realisation of his ideal in a future which he indeed thinks of as very near at hand, but of which he will not attempt to force on the coming, but leaves it to the will of the Lord of the Church. That is not a Montanistic but a Catholic attitude. The Roman system of penitential discipline might attach itself to Hermas, only that it rejects his apocalyptic, eschatological point of view, and therefore extends



the tolerance, which he only desired to see applied for a definite period of short duration, into the regular practice, without any such limitation.

The same Catholic compromise between the ideal and the actual appears also in the ethic of Hermas, in the distinction between what is commanded to all and the extraordinarily meritorious works of certain individuals. It is true that he does not reckon among the latter the actual monkish vow of complete renunciation of marriage and of property, but only the renunciation of second marriage and the giving away of what has been saved by asceticism, and in general of what is not strictly needed, as alms to the poor; not abstinence from all worldly business, but only from over-absorption in worldly business, from an assiduity which enervates the spirit and stifles it with earthly cares; not a deliberate mortification of the flesh or a striving after martyrdom, but only the willing endurance of sufferings and persecutions. To this extent it must be admitted that those writers are not altogether wrong who say that the ethical ideal of Hermas is at bottom only the original evangelical ideal of the life turned away from the world and turned towards heaven. At the same time it is not to be overlooked that the dual standard of morality of the Catholic ethics is here foreshadowed by the way in which Hermas gives to world-renouncing ascetic idealism the position of a higher stage of Christian perfection, above the lower stage, which is also recognised and permitted, attained by those Christians who still cling to wealth and worldly business. It is this characteristically Roman accommodation to the actual conditions of the earthly life of human society which distinguishes Hermas from the abstract idealism

of the Montanists and the primitive community. But since in principle he holds their ideal and emphasises it strongly in opposition to the growing worldliness of the Church of his time, he is inevitably driven to set up a dual ethical standard—one for the average Christian, and another and higher for the pattern Christian. In this also, as in the question of repentance, the Catholic Church has only proceeded further along the middle path upon which Hermas took the first steps.

The same remark applies to the character of the theological thought in Hermas, so far as he can be said to have any. His Christology is the still popularly simple prototype of the doctrine of the Dual Nature, which, three hundred years later, the Roman bishop Leo expounded to, and got accepted by, the Œcumenical Council. Far as Hermas was from the *finesses* of the later doctrine, he has nevertheless quite definitely anticipated its fundamental idea, that of the eternal Son of God and the man Jesus being so united in one person that they are not to be separated, and, on the other hand, are not to be confused. And here, too, the determining factor was the characteristic Roman instinct for a practical compromise between opposing interests: on the one hand men were to see in the Redeemer the appearing of an eternal Divine being, on the other the genuinely human example of ethical life and endeavour. That this ethical point of view was not entirely driven out by the mystical God-Christ of the East was an immense gain which the Church owes to the practical sense of the Romans, such as first finds expression in the "Shepherd" of Hermas. In comparison with this primary decisive fact, the other feature of his doctrine, on which historians of dogma are wont chiefly to lay

stress, is of quite subordinate importance—the fact, namely, that the eternal Son of God who dwelt in the flesh of Jesus is not as yet thought of as the Second Person of the Trinity, consubstantial with the Father, but is identified with the Holy Spirit, and on occasion even classed with the six archangels as their chief. There is at that period nothing at all surprising in this; it was simply the form which lay to hand, that in which the naïve consciousness of the Church, before the Logos Christology had arisen, was accustomed to represent to itself the Divine in Jesus. Later, of course, this way of representing it would have caused offence, when once the Logos conception had arisen as a means of distinguishing the Divine in Christ from the Deity of the Father and of the Spirit. But the simple fact is, that of the Logos conception Hermas knew nothing, and as he was certainly a good orthodox teacher, the Roman Church of his time (middle of the second century!) cannot have known anything of it either. How this fact can be harmonised with the traditional assumption that the Fourth Gospel had been known in the Church since the beginning of the second century as an apostolic writing is for me the only riddle presented by the much-discussed question of the Christology of Hermas. The view of Christ's saving work which we find here is also quite in accordance with the prevailing view in the second century; the view of Christianity as the "new law." Christ is the Law-giver who communicates to His fellow-servants the commands revealed to Him by God, and by His own loyal fulfilment, and more than fulfilment, of what was commanded, has given an example of a life well-pleasing to God. The Law-giver is, however, also the

Judge. He is the Master-builder who inspects His Church and tests the stones to determine their serviceableness, and decides whether they should be accepted or rejected for the building of the tower. It is, therefore, in the technical language of theology, the functions of the perfect prophet and king which form the aspect in which Christ's work presents itself to Hermas. On the other hand, he says nothing of a priestly mediation, or of an expiatory effect of Christ's death. The Pauline doctrine of redemption is absent in Hermas, not because his manner of thought was Judaistic—nothing was further from him than that—but because his manner of thought was that of his time and his people, because he, as a Roman, saw in Christianity essentially the new and perfect law, in the Church the community of the righteous, and in the moral conduct of believers the condition of belonging to the house of God. That may be called moralism, but not Judaism, for there is not a trace in Hermas of any kind of privilege attributed to the Jewish nation or of any significance attached to the Jewish ceremonial law. Even the Old Testament patriarchs need, according to him, Christian preaching and baptism, which only reaches them in Hades through the Apostles, in order to obtain entrance into the Church and a share in the blessedness of eternal life. This is the form in which here the Old Testament people of God, as elsewhere the Old Testament word of God, is claimed by the Church as its own property. It is an expression of its consciousness of having outgrown the Jewish people but grown into the Old Testament Scriptures. That was the Church's parallel to the political methods of Rome, which adopted the gods of the conquered nations into its own pantheon.

## POPULAR CHURCH WRITINGS OF AN EDIFYING CHARACTER

### CHAPTER XVII

#### THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

So closely is the Epistle of James connected with the "Shepherd" of Hermas, both in regard to the period and circumstances implied in the two writings and in their tone and purpose, that it is possible to say that "the Epistle of James is really only the hortatory and polemical version of the apocalyptic Shepherd."<sup>1</sup> It is only the apocalyptic pictures of the Church which are wholly lacking in the prosaic Epistle of James; the exhortations and calls to repentance of the "Shepherd," for which the visions after all only form the frame, find parallels, shorter, indeed, but exactly corresponding in content, in the Epistle of James. Both writings are a protest of simple, practical, and popular religion against the secularisation of Christianity which was making headway among the classes which formed the aristocracy of wealth and knowledge, an Early-Church prelude to similar movements of later times, such as those of the Waldenses and Minorites. That a writing of this kind cannot date from the times of the primitive

<sup>1</sup> Schwegler, *Nachapost. Zeitalter*, i. 424.

apostolic community is self-evident. Besides, it would be a curious error to transfer to the pre-Pauline beginnings of the Palestinian church a writing which quotes with polemical intent the catchword of the Pauline doctrine of justification; and yet such an error is easily accounted for by the embarrassment which was bound to attend the attempt to explain the Epistle on the traditional presupposition that it belonged to the apostolic age, whether in the wider or narrower sense. For of all the questions on which the Pauline controversies turned—the abrogation or the permanent validity of the Mosaic Law, circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath and other feasts, the national prerogative of Israel in the Messianic kingdom, the relation of the Old to the New Covenants in general—there is absolutely not the slightest trace in the Epistle of James. How is this conceivable at the time of the most vigorous conflicts between Paulinism and its Judaizing opponents—that is, in the lifetime or very soon after the death of the Apostle Paul? This question is certainly fully justified, but it by no means follows from the impossibility of referring the book to the time of Paul that it is possible to date it back to the pre-Pauline period. One is as impossible as the other, so the only possibility remaining open is to refer it to post-apostolic times, and the only question is *how far down* in the post-apostolic period we have to go to find a place for it. On this point the decision must be given partly by its relation of dependence towards the rest of the early Christian literature, partly by its patristic attestation.

In the latter respect the Epistle of James is in a less

favourable position than any other New Testament writing. It is first mentioned by Origen, and even then expressly as a contested writing. Clement of Alexandria is indeed said by Eusebius to have commented on it, among the other Catholic Epistles, but whether that is correct seems very doubtful, since no trace of acquaintance with it is found in his extant writings. Nor is there any trace in Irenæus and Tertullian. The most suspicious point of all is that even the pseudo-Clementine Homilies, the tone of which is so like that of the Epistle of James, and which might have made such effective use of it in furtherance of their purpose, knew nothing of it; finally, the Muratorian Canon is silent in regard to the Epistle of James, though it expressly mentions Hermas. How anyone can reconcile this unanimous silence of the earliest witnesses with the traditional assumption of the high antiquity of the Epistle is to me incomprehensible. To explain it from distaste of the Fathers for the contents of the Epistle is impossible, if only because they ought in that case to have ignored the "Shepherd" also, which, as is well known, they did not do. To this negative proof from the silence of the oldest witnesses we have to add the positive evidence from the comparison with other early Christian literature. Now, in the first place, the acquaintance of James with the principal Pauline Epistles, from which he takes the formula of justification by faith (Gal. ii. 16; Rom. iii. 28, iv. 2 ff.), is absolutely beyond doubt. But he also knew the Epistle to the Hebrews, as is evident not only from the verbal echo of Heb. xii. 11 in James iii. 18, but especially from the two scriptural examples, Abraham's sacrifice and Rahab's deed (Jas.

ii. 21 and 25), which are found together as examples of faith only in Heb. xi. 17 and 31, where they begin and close an oratorical passage of some length, and where the example of Rahab is naturally suggested by the previous mention of Jericho. James also knew the Apocalypse, for the resemblances of Jas. ii. 5 to Apoc. ii. 9, of Jas. v. 9 to Apoc. iii. 20, and of Jas. i. 12 to Apoc. ii. 10, are too striking to be merely due to chance. In the last passage, James' appeal to a Divine promise can only have this passage of the Apocalypse in view, because the promise of a crown of life (στέφανος τῆς ζωῆς) is found nowhere else. Further, a close relationship is generally admitted between the Epistle of James and First Peter; and the arguments of Brückner<sup>1</sup> have put it beyond doubt that the priority must be on the side of the latter. The same will then apply also to the First Epistle of Clement, the points of contact of which with the Epistle of James might, apart from this, be explained as due to their having a common source in First Peter (Clem. xxx. 2 = 1 Pet. v. 5 = Jas. iv. 6; Clem. xlix. 5 = 1 Pet. iv. 8 = Jas. v. 20). Finally, the resemblances between James and Hermas are so numerous and striking that there can be hardly any doubt of direct use of the one by the other. It is usual, no doubt, to find the priority on the side of James, but I have looked in vain for any grounds for this assumption. To me the preponderance of probability seems to be in favour of the contrary relation, because the parallels in Hermas to the aphoristic sentences in James are found in an appropriate context in longer

<sup>1</sup> In Hilgenfeld's *Zeitschr. f. wiss. Theol.*, 1874, p. 522 ff. Cf. also the Introductions of Holtzmann and Von Soden.



discourses.<sup>1</sup> But whatever decision may be come to on the question of priority, it is in any case certain that both works imply the same period and circumstances, and address their moral exhortations to their contemporaries from the same standpoint, having in view men among whom a lax, worldly tone of mind and unfruitful theological scholasticism was threatening to destroy the religious life.

If these results are accepted, we have a basis on which the much-discussed question regarding the readers of the book may be settled. That the superscription, "To the Twelve Tribes in the Dispersion," cannot refer to the Jews is in a Christian epistle self-evident. But a reference to Jewish Christians will not fit either, for various reasons. At the time when this Epistle was written, if there were any unmixed Jewish-Christian churches, they were certainly only to be found in Palestine, and these are definitely excluded by the addition "in the Diaspora." And why should the author direct his exhortations only to the Jewish Christians scattered throughout the heathen world, seeing that the evils which he combats were certainly not confined to these, but were also present among Gentile Christians? And surely it is only among the latter that we can understand the boasting of faith without works which James attacks, whereas this form of error was absolutely unheard of in Jewish-Christian churches. There remains, therefore, no other alternative but to see in "the Twelve Tribes" a designation for Christians in general, the explanation of which is not that the author held

<sup>1</sup> Cf., e.g., Jas. iv. 7 with Herm., *Mand.* xii. 5; Jas. iii. 15 f. with Herm., *Mand.* xi., Jas. i. 27 and iv. 17 with Herm., *Mand.* viii.; Jas. i. 20 f. with Herm., *Mand.* v.

Christianity to be only a modified Judaism, but that, with Paul and the authors of the Epistle of Barnabas and 2 Clement,<sup>1</sup> he held Christians to be the true Israel of God, the new and greater people of God which had taken the place of the former one. The peculiar expression "the Twelve Tribes" doubtless has its immediate roots in the passage of Hermas where Christians of the Twelve Tribes, that is, of the nations of the world, are assembled (*Sim.* ix. 17). The addition "in the Diaspora" is an imitation of 1 Pet. i. 1. The local limitation there added is omitted in James, and the expression thus acquires the general sense of "the Christians scattered throughout the world"; it simply denotes the "Catholic" destination of the Epistle. Nor can the objection be admitted that the Epistle does nevertheless imply the particular circumstances of an individual church, and, indeed, as we must conclude from Hermas, of the Roman Church. This observation is indeed true, but it by no means forbids us to suppose that the author wished to address the exhortations which had been suggested to him in the first place by the conditions of his own environment to Christians in general, on the assumption that similarly unsatisfactory conditions were to be found everywhere—just as Hermas received the command to send his revelations, which were primarily intended for the Roman Church, to other churches also (*Vis.* ii. 4. 3).

Nor, again, can it be made an objection against the Catholic destination of the letter that in ii. 2 the meeting of the Church is spoken of as a *synagogue*. There is no ground for inferring from this that the Epistle was destined either for Jewish Christians in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gal. vi. 16; Barn. iv. 6, xiii. 1, 3; 2 Clem. ii. 3.

general or for a Jewish Christian conventicle within the Roman Church, for the expression is repeatedly used by Hermas, Ignatius, and others, for the meeting of the Christian Church.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the Epistle of James is not rightly understood if it is sought, on the ground of ii. 14–26, in a theological polemic against the Pauline theology. The author is so far from wishing to engage in theological polemics that all theologising and disputation is the object of his cordial hatred. In the strife of teachers and schools about words and theories he sees, just as much as in the strife about mine and thine and in the busy pursuit of wealth and pleasure, a sign of that worldly wisdom which is the opposite of the wisdom from above, or true Christian piety. What he aims at is the restoration of a quiet, unworldly Christianity expressing itself in renunciation and the exercise of compassionate love to one's neighbour; what he attacks is secularised Christianity such as has got a foothold among the upper classes, the rich and the wise of this world. Especially is his denunciatory zeal directed against the rich, who strive after the satisfaction of their worldly desires and indulge in envy and hatred, whose friendship with the world is enmity towards God, who in their confident making of plans forget the transiency of all earthly things and their dependence on the Divine providence, men who in their gathering of riches and comfortable lives neglect to do good, nay, even withhold from the workman his payment and condemn

<sup>1</sup> Herm., *Mand.* xi. 9, 13, 14; Ign., *Ad Polyc.* iv. 2; *Ad Trall.* iii. Further parallels from Justin, Clement, Dionysius, Alex., and the *Apost. Constit.*, are quoted by Harnack on the Hermas passage.

and murder the righteous (iv. 1-v. 6). The gravity of this last charge, which is perhaps to be put down to rhetorical exaggeration, ought not to prevent us from referring this polemic to rich members of the Church, though it is always possible that in his summary condemnation of this whole social class no very definite distinction is drawn between the Christian and non-Christian rich. Certainly it is the Christian rich who are told in i. 10 that they ought to seek their glory in a (spontaneous) self-humiliation, in humbly taking the same level as their (in the worldly sense) inferior brother, who glories in his (spiritual) exaltation. The passage reminds us of the reproach brought by Hermas against those rich men who from arrogance and avarice withdraw from the Church, and of his exhortation to them by beneficence towards the more pious poor to seek their more effectual prayers to cover their own want of spiritual power. With this estimate of rich and poor it of course appeared all the more preposterous to our author when he was obliged to see the rich preferred to the poor even within the meetings of the Christians for worship (ii. 1-9). Whether we are here to think of rich and poor Christians or of proselytes attending the service as guests, makes no matter. In either case the passage shows that in consequence of the growing numbers in which the upper classes were associating themselves with Christianity the churches could not help giving some recognition to social distinctions. Those of stricter views could not but see in this a perverse judgment consequent on a lack of religious decision, and contradictory to the Divine judgment which had chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith (*cf.* 1 Cor. i. 26 ff.), and to their

experience that it was just from the rich (from the ruling classes) that the persecution and false accusation of Christians proceeded.

But it is not only against the aristocracy of wealth, but also against the aristocracy of knowledge, that James directs his invective. As in the former the irreligious spirit manifested itself in worldliness, avarice, and hardness of heart, so in the latter it showed itself in an arrogant pride of knowledge, in an ambitious attempt to force themselves into the teaching office in the Church, and in self-opinionated disputes.<sup>1</sup> To the empty talk about faith, to the sins of the tongue, which do so much mischief, to the bitter envy and quarrelling which are associated with self-conceited earthly wisdom, to the false judgments about the brethren and about the law, he opposes the true wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, obedient, full of mercy and good fruits, free from doubt and hypocrisy (ii. 14–iii. 18). This reminds us of the venomous party spirit and ambitious place-hunting with which Hermas reproaches the leaders of the Church (*Vis.* iii. 10), and more especially of his contrast between the true and the false

<sup>1</sup> The connection between the polemic against the rich and that against the teachers of worldly wisdom was rightly recognised by Schwegler, following Kern, but when he concluded thence that the antithesis between rich and poor coincides with that between Jewish and Gentile Christians, he fell into a curious error. The haughty rich are to be Jews, the ill-treated poor, Gentiles! Such perversity could only arise from a failure to understand that even in Early Christianity, as at all times, social contrasts had a much greater and more pervasive significance than any doctrinal difference. Even for James the theological antithesis is only one element in the more general social antithesis, which has nothing whatever to do with the relation between Gentile and Jewish Christianity.

prophetic spirit (*Mand.* xi. 8 ff.): the true Divine Spirit that comes from above is gentle and quiet and humble, and refrains from all evil and vain desires of this world; the false spirit, on the other hand, is earthly and of the devil, empty, powerless, foolish, arrogant and ambitious, shameless, chattering, luxurious, treacherous, mercenary, and so forth. This affinity is so obvious that we are certainly justified in assuming that James had here the same people in view as Hermas. And if the latter were, beyond all doubt, the Gnostic rhetoricians and prophets, representative of various Schools, who about the middle of the second century were very active at Rome, we shall have to seek the teachers combated by James in the very same quarter. It is no sufficient objection against this that, if so, James would certainly have characterised these false teachers more precisely. The fact is that to have done so would have been as foreign to his practical nature, disinclined as it was to all theorising, as to Hermas and 2 Clement, who were undoubtedly contemporaries of the Gnostics. Moreover, indications pointing in this direction are not wholly wanting. When he calls the false wisdom "psychic" (iii. 15), he does so doubtless in opposition to those who professed themselves, on the ground of their higher gnosis, to be the true "Pneumatics"; the same people are described by Jude (verse 19) as "psychic, not having spirit."<sup>1</sup> And as Jude reproaches these Gnostics, among other things, with complaining of fate (*μεμφίμοιροι*, verse 16), so James in i. 13 gives a warning against those who attributed temptation to God instead of

<sup>1</sup> There is no article in the German, or in the original.—

to their own lusts, thus putting the guilt of their sin upon God or fate. That this was done by Gnostics is testified by Irenæus, who addressed to the Gnostic Florinus a treatise arguing that God was not the author of evil. Again, when James in iv. 11 speaks of men who "judge the law" instead of doing it, the criticism applied by Cerdon and Marcion to the Old Testament is not unnaturally suggested. Finally, the application of the Pauline doctrine of justification in the sense of a dead, practically unfruitful intellectual belief—where else is that so likely to have had its home as just in those Gnostic circles which were once more emphasising, as energetically as one-sidedly, the Pauline doctrines which in the consciousness of the Church had become more and more obscured? <sup>1</sup>

What James opposes to these errors of an ultra-Pauline Gnosticism is not another, for example, a Jewish-Christian, theology, but simply *practical Christianity* in the sense in which the Catholic Church understood it and demanded it from the faithful. From this point of view the much-misunderstood passage in Jas. ii. 14-26 becomes simple enough: "What does it profit if a man says he has faith, but

<sup>1</sup> Alongside of these polemical relations with the false teachers we find one case of borrowing from the terminology of Greek philosophy. The expression in iii. 6, τροχὸς τῆς γενέσεως (= wheel of birth), is, in the Orphic and Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration, the term for the cycle of necessity (τροχὸς τῆς μοίρας is used synonymously with τρ. τ. γενέσεως), which compels souls to go on entering into new births until they are purged from their impurities and are able to escape from the cycle. Cf. Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 416 f. Is it conceivable that James, traditionally the brother of the Lord, a born Galilæan, and at Jerusalem a zealot for the Law, could have come to be thus acquainted with the technical terms of Orphic mystery-doctrine?

has not works? Can faith save him?" That this is impossible is shown first by the analogy of a love which expresses itself only in words and not in works, and is therefore useless; next by the impossibility of proving the possession of faith in the absence of works;<sup>1</sup> then by the example of the demons, whose belief in the existence of the one God is of no profit to them with a view to salvation; finally, from the historical examples of Abraham and Rahab, who had been used by the Pauline school (*vide* Heb.) as examples of the righteousness of faith, but are turned by James into examples of justification by works, in which faith was indeed present (as a motive) but had to be supplemented by works in order to bring about the result of justification. The conclusion drawn from all this is that a man is saved by works and not by faith alone, and that faith without works is as dead as the body without the spirit. It is, of course, undeniably true that the genuine Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, in its original sense, is not hit by this criticism. To a dead faith such as is implied here, a faith such as demons might have, Paul would never have ascribed justification; indeed he would never have admitted it to be real Christian faith at all, for by that he understood the surrender of the heart to the love of Christ, which as an inspiring power urges all men to good. The faith which James

<sup>1</sup> The phrase in ii. 18, ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις κἀγὼ ἔργα ἔχω, can, on linguistic grounds, only be taken as suggesting the objection of an opponent (ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις), but is then in its present form incomprehensible. I conjecture that the words πίστιν and ἔργα have changed places through a copyist's error, and that we ought to read σὺ ἔργα ἔχεις κἀγὼ πίστιν ἔχω—only in this way does it give an intelligible sense.



declared to be insufficient for salvation is therefore not really faith in the sense in which Paul himself uses the term, but only in that of the contemporary Pauline school, which by a Gnosticising intellectualism emptied the Pauline idea of its religious depth and moral power, making it a theoretical opinion, the acceptance of a doctrine, of a dogma—in short, a mere matter of the intellect, in conjunction with which the moral life could, and in many cases did, remain impure and unfruitful. As against the empty boasting of a faith of this kind the protest of James was doubtless fully justified. It is equally certain, however, that James did not distinguish between the distorted doctrine of faith of his Paulinist opponents and that of Paul himself, and therefore intended to combat the latter as well as the former. When he says, “You see, then, that men are justified by works and not by the law alone,” any unprejudiced reader must see in this a polemical allusion to the assertion of Paul, “We conclude, therefore, that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law” (Jas. ii. 24; Rom. iii. 28). And when both appeal in support of their thesis to the example of Abraham, it is clear that this is not a fortuitous coincidence, but that James desires to wrest from Paul, or his School, their favourite Scriptural argument.

It is quite intelligible how James came to extend his enmity against the doctrinaire Gnostic Paulinists of his time so as to include Paul himself. The fact is that because the ultra-Paulinists appealed to the letter of Paul's writings in support of their unethical doctrine, Paul fell into the same condemnation, in the eyes of the anti-Gnostic Catholics, as they; and the more readily because James himself, as well as

his opponents, understood faith in an essentially theoretic sense, as a fixed, undoubting conviction of the truth of the Divine commands and promises, a conception which made a right estimate of genuine Paulinism altogether impossible for him. But in this respect James was not, as has sometimes been suggested, in the same position with the Jewish Christians only, but also with the Catholic Church of his time. Look where we will in the literature of the time, we nowhere find any deeper conception of faith. Even in the deutero-Pauline Pastoral Epistles and the Epistles of Ignatius, "faith" is understood in the theoretic sense and is therefore no longer used alone as the comprehensive term for Christian piety in general, but in conjunction with love, patience, obedience, works.<sup>1</sup> The "Shepherd" of Hermas, especially, offers many parallels to James' estimate of faith, for according to him also there are many Christians who have faith, that is, acceptance of traditional Church teaching, but are wanting in true piety and moral conduct (*cf. Mand. x. 1; Sim. viii. 10, ix. 22*). It is, moreover, to be remarked that this Catholic weakening down of the idea of faith, a necessary consequence of which was its need to be supplemented in one way or other, is not to be explained as due to pagan any more than to Jewish conceptions, but occurs in any church where the enthusiasm at first associated with the new religious idea begins to decline. For that reason we must recognise it as a salutary disposition of Providence that the Epistle of James was received into the Canon, since it

<sup>1</sup> *Cf., e.g., Ign., Ad Eph. xiv. 1, ἀρχὴ μὲν πίστις, τέλος δὲ ἀγάπη*, with the statement in *Jas. ii. 22, ἡ πίστις ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἐτελειώθη*. On the Pastoral Epistles, see above, iii. 392 f.

so vigorously champions the cause of undogmatic practical Christianity against any faith that is in process of ossifying into doctrinaire ecclesiasticism and orthodox profession.

Undogmatic the Epistle of James certainly is, beyond any other document of Early Christianity. While in the parallel literature, alongside of the ethical view of subjective Christianity, the peculiar religious content of the Christian revelation finds expression in the theological doctrines of the higher nature of Christ and the Church, and of the mystic efficacy of the Christian sacraments, there is in the Epistle of James hardly a faint trace of these doctrines. Of Christ's redeeming work there is no mention. His name is directly named only in i. 1 and ii. 1; on the latter occasion with the addition "the Christ 'of glory.'" Besides that, He is to be understood in v. 9 under the figure of the judge who stands before the door (following Apoc. iii. 20), and perhaps as the sole Law-giver and judge who is able to save and to destroy (iv. 12). The object of faith is described in i. 18 in general terms as "the word of truth" by which "the Father of lights has, according to his will, begotten us as the first-fruits of his creatures." These sayings remind us of 1 Pet. i. 3, where, however, the resurrection of Christ is specially mentioned as the secondary cause of regeneration, while James says nothing of it. The thought of the latter saying finds perhaps its closest parallel in 2 Clement, according to which "the Father of truth has revealed the truth to us, and thereby made us out of nothing into his people by his will" (2 Clem. i. 8, xx. 5). As the content of this word of truth we have no doubt to think, in James, as in Clement and Hermas, first of

the knowledge of the unity of God (ii. 19), and next of the perfect Law of God revealed by the Law-giver Christ. This is the word which saves souls when it is received in meekness as the implanted<sup>1</sup> (that is to say, made inward) word, which is not merely an object of hearing and of passing consideration, but is put in practice in spontaneous obedience (i. 21–25). This Christian law has no longer anything to do with the Mosaic ceremonial law; the old Pauline controversies lie so far in the past that the burning question of Apostolic times is not even touched on. The Christian law is described—in contrast with the imperfect and enslaving law of the Mosaic letter—as the perfect law of liberty<sup>2</sup> (i. 25, ii. 12). This has for its content the moral duties of the decalogue, which are summed up in the “royal law” of love to one’s neighbour, in accordance with the saying of Jesus in the Gospel (ii. 8). He who allows all his sayings and doings to be regulated by this law will be saved by his doing, since, for the merciful, mercy will take precedence of justice, even at the Divine judgment (i. 25, ii. 12 f.; *cf.* Matt. v. 7, Luke vi. 35 ff.). If a man has committed sin it will be forgiven him if he shows his repentance by confessing and turning from his errors, and to this result the intercessory prayer of

<sup>1</sup> ἔμφυτον λόγον, i. 21, is not to be interpreted in accordance with Clem., *Homil.* xvii. 18, with reference to the innate sense of truth or natural revelation, but in accordance with Barn. i. 2 and ix. 9, of the inwardly appropriated Christian revelation. That the λόγος is ἔμφυτος is not the presupposition but the consequence of the δέξασθε.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* Barn. ii. 6, ὁ καινὸς νόμος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἄνευ ζυγοῦ ἀνάγκης ὄν. “The expression νόμος ἐλευθερίας combines ideas which in Gal. ii. 4, v. 1, 2 Cor. iii. 17, form a sharp contrast” (Holtzmann).

the righteous contributes, and it has also power to heal the consequences of sin, viz. diseases (v. 15–20).

This doctrine of salvation is so far removed from the Pauline doctrine and comes so near that of the Gospels that it is quite intelligible that many, under the influence of this impression, have held the doctrine to be pre-Pauline. Nevertheless this is—apart from the reasons mentioned above which make a pre-Pauline date for the composition of the letter quite impossible—an error, because it overlooks the fact that just those apologetic and eschatological interests which for the primitive community stood in the foreground, are scarcely less foreign to the Epistle of James than is the Pauline doctrine of redemption. That Jesus is the Messiah, in spite of His crucifixion and because of His resurrection, and that at His speedy return He will bring with Him the promised salvation, these were the facts which the primitive community was concerned to prove from historical experiences and Scriptural evidences: round these its preaching centred, and these cardinal points of its apologetic could not have been so completely ignored in an Epistle emanating from it as they are in James.<sup>1</sup> The absence of dogmatic interest in this Epistle does not point to a time when the Church was still eagerly engaged in settling the foundations of its belief, but rather to a time when these foundations were firmly fixed and when the Church had to guard itself against the rank growth of theological speculations, and to secure the ethical principles of Christianity against the danger of secularisation, which in earlier times was by no means so imminent. The phenomenon is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the pertinent remarks of Von Soden in *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.*, 1884, p. 158 f.

the same as in the case of the Johannine theology, of which the greater dogmatic simplicity as compared with the Pauline does not point to priority of time, but has the work of Paul as its presupposition. The positive contribution of the latter when separated from his anti-Jewish dialectic is preserved in the simpler form of the Johannine Hellenism. But whereas the Hellenism of Asia Minor preserved and developed the speculative and mystic elements of Paulinism, these were rather lost sight of by the Church of Rome with its practical tendency. The result was that the Catholic Christianity which here developed in the course of the second century, on the basis of the Pauline Gentile Christianity, was in reality very little distinguished from pre-Christian Hellenism. Faith in one God and His universally binding moral law, and rewards and punishments in the other world, are the characteristics of the latter, and also form the essential content of the orthodox faith as it presents itself to us in the writings which we have just been discussing. The only difference lies in the fact that this faith has now acquired a historical foundation in the revelation of Christ, of which the Church preserved the tradition, and had received a social organisation in the institution of the Church. The less this positive churchly side is made the subject of reflection, the more clearly appears the close relationship between the earliest Catholic Christianity and pre-Christian Hellenism. The Epistle of James, the Hellenism of which is attested by numerous points of contact with Philo and the Book of Wisdom, furnishes the most instructive example of this.<sup>1</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> I may refer the reader to Siegfried's *Philo*, p. 311 ff., where the parallel passages are carefully compared.

if even pre-Christian Hellenism had weakened very much the distinction between born Jews of the Diaspora and Gentile proselytes, in Christian Hellenism this distinction of birth ceased to have any significance at all. While, therefore, it is quite possible that the author of the Epistle of James may have been of Jewish descent,<sup>1</sup> that does not mean that his Christianity was Jewish Christianity as opposed to Gentile Christianity; it was just that practical Catholicism which, in the course of the second century, developed, especially in the Roman Church, out of Hellenistic Gentile Christianity, by the weakening down or elimination of the specifically Pauline doctrines.

<sup>1</sup> That the author of the "Catholic Epistle," who writes an easy Greek style and shows himself well acquainted with Hellenistic literature, was the brother of Jesus who was so highly respected in the primitive community (Gal. i. 19, ii. 9), who was an Aramaic-speaking Galilæan and a narrow-minded legalist (Gal. ii. 12, Acts xxi. 18 f.), is an entirely arbitrary invention of Church tradition to which this book itself gives no support, since it describes the author simply as "James, the servant of God and of Jesus Christ." There must have been plenty of Hellenistic Christians in the second century with the common name of James, and in the locality where the Epistle originated the particular James who names himself as the author of it was doubtless well known. It was only elsewhere, where he was unknown, and later, when every edifying treatise was expected to have, so far as possible, an authoritative name dating from Apostolic times, that the modest designation "James, the servant of God and of Christ," was falsely referred to the brother of Jesus. This hypothesis of a subsequent false attribution seems to me more probable than an original fiction, whether of the author of the whole or of some later person who might be supposed to have affixed the epistolatory superscription to a previously anonymous homily. In either of these cases we should certainly have expected that the forger would not have neglected to give some clear indication that this James was the highly-respected brother of the Lord.

POPULAR CHURCH WRITINGS OF AN EDIFYING  
CHARACTER

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS

IN the introduction (chapter i.) to this homily in the form of an epistle the author expresses, following closely the introduction to the Epistle to the Romans, his joy at the Christian standing of his readers, and then goes on to describe the purpose of his letter. He desires to help them a little, that, together with their faith, their knowledge may be perfect. The three principal things taught by the Lord are, he says, the hope of life as the beginning and end of our faith, righteousness as the beginning and end of judgment, and, lastly, joyful love, which approves itself in works of righteousness. The past, present, and future have been made known to us by the Lord through the prophets. Next follows a general or introductory section, chapters ii.-iv., in which the author's main idea is announced. This is that the ritual system with its sacrifices and fasts is abolished and now all authority belongs to the *new law* of our Lord Christ, which is without yoke of compulsion, without external sacrifices and fasts,<sup>1</sup> and therefore

<sup>1</sup> ii. 6. Ταῦτα οὖν κατήργησεν, ἵνα ὁ καινὸς νόμος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν  
I. X. ἀνευ ζυγοῦ ἀνάγκης ὦν, μὴ ἀνθρωποποίητον ἔχη τὴν προσφορὰν. ...



the people of God whom He has prepared for Himself in His Beloved (*i.e.* Christians), must have a pure faith (purged of Jewish leaven) and no longer allow themselves to be attracted to that law as proselytes (iii. 6). Now, especially, when the time of the end predicted by the prophets (Dan. vii.) is at hand, we ought no longer to imitate certain who say, "Your [the Jews] covenant is also ours; it is indeed ours, but ours only, for the Jews broke it even in Moses' day." Therefore his readers ought now, knowing the miserable end of Judaism, to discard all worthless things, Jewish as well as heathen, and ought not in self-righteous pride to separate themselves from the Christian Church, but to live as befits the children of God, that the dark Enemy may not find access to us (iv. 6-14). In this endeavour the author designs to help them by the instruction which he is about to give. This is divided into two main portions: (1) the theoretical portion (chapters v.-xvii.) instructs in the knowledge of Christianity as the sole true religion, which is founded on the death of Christ, but was already taught in the Old Testament, using for this purpose an interpretation of the Old Testament by means of types and allegories; (2) the practical portion (chapters xviii.-xxi.) sketches, under the figure of the Two Ways, an imaginary picture of the Christian life, and of the unchristian, ungodly life.

The "knowledge of the past and the future" for which we are indebted to the Lord (v. 3) consists, according to the author, in the perception that the whole of the Old Testament, according to prophecy and the law, was nothing else, and from the beginning was intended to be nothing else, than a representation in advance of the saving facts and means of grace of

Christianity. This is shown, without any particular logical order, from individual instances. The death of Christ, which had the purpose of filling up the measure of the Jews' sins, but of securing for us forgiveness of sins, sanctification, and victory over death, was quite definitely foretold by the prophets, even to the manner of His death and the circumstances attending it. It is also typically represented by the two goats on the Day of Atonement, the ashes of the red heifer, the number (318) of the servants of Abraham, the figure of Moses praying with outstretched arms, and the brazen serpent set up by Moses in the wilderness.

As regards circumcision, in which the Jews put their trust, it was interpreted even by the prophets in the only sense intended by God—that, namely, of a spiritual circumcision of the heart and ears, but the Jews, misled by an evil spirit, misunderstood it in a corporeal sense. And if it should be said that circumcision served the people of God as the seal of the covenant, he would ask whether the Syrians, Arabs, and Egyptians, who all practised circumcision, were partakers of their (the Jewish) covenant? Moreover, it may be shown that even at its introduction by Abraham it looked forward to the cross of Christ, since the number of the servants of Abraham who were circumcised was 318, which number contains the letters I (=10), H (=8), and T (=300), and therefore clearly typified the cross (T being a symbol for the cross) of Jesus. Then, again, the command to abstain from eating unclean beasts was not intended in the literal sense, but in the moral sense that we ought not to have fellowship with men who in their greediness and forgetfulness

of God are like swine, or like the rapacious and lazy birds of prey such as eagles, hawks, and ravens, or lustful hares, or the like. Similarly, by the permission to eat the animals that chew the cud and divide the hoof is meant the fellowship of those who ruminate on the word of God in thought and word, and walk in the right way. All this Moses intended in the spiritual sense, but the Jews, in consequence of their fleshly-mindedness, applied it to eating; it is only to us Christians that the proper understanding (the moral sense) of these commandments has been revealed by the Lord.

As with the cross of Christ, so with the Christian means of salvation, baptism; the author finds it often pointed to in the Old Testament, and, moreover, in conjunction with the Jewish contempt for it; *e.g.*, in Jer. ii. 13, "They have abandoned me, the fountain of life, and have digged for themselves a pit of death" (where he alters the passage to suit his purpose). That in general the promise of the inheritance was not given to the Jewish people but to the Christian Church is proved by the writer from the history of the patriarchs, in which the younger son (as the representative of the younger people of God) frequently secured the blessing instead of the elder, and from the fact that Abraham was appointed the father of the (Gentile) nations, who believe while in uncircumcision (which, of course, is taken rather from Rom. iv. than from Genesis). The covenant was no doubt given to the fathers of Israel through Moses, but since they showed themselves unworthy of it by their sins, Moses immediately broke the tables of the covenant, and instead of the Jews, we, through Jesus Christ the heir, have come into possession of the

covenant, and by His redemption have become the true "People of the Inheritance." The Sabbath has reference only to the millennial kingdom, which is to follow six thousand years of cosmic time as the Divine Day of Rest, for it is only when Christ shall have come again and made all things new that we shall be able truly to keep holy the Day of Rest of the Lord, when we ourselves have been made holy.

The worst mistake of all which was made by this miserable nation was in putting their trust in the Temple as if it were God's house, as they believed, quite in the manner of the heathen, whereas even the prophets said that the heaven was God's throne and the earth his footstool, and that therefore it was impossible to build Him a house. Now when their temple has been destroyed, according to prophecy, the workmen of their enemies will rebuild it, *i.e.* as a heathen temple, and in that way the Divine sentence of condemnation pronounced upon the Jewish temple-worship receives its most striking confirmation. But *we* know that the true dwelling-place of God is the spiritual temple of our inner man, in which God dwells, and which is built for Him by His word of faith, promise, and the commandments.

The author expresses the hope that he has now communicated to his readers all that is requisite to their salvation—they would not understand further revelations about things present and to come, seeing they lie hid in parables (xvii.). Accordingly, he goes on in chapter xviii. to the practical part of his teaching. He discusses the way of light, which stands under the authority of God and the angels of light, and the way of darkness, which is under

Satan. In his picture of Christian virtue, there stand in the forefront the love and the fear of God and the glorifying of the Redeemer. After that follow, without any strict order of enumeration, the virtues of simplicity of heart and spiritual wealth, humility, purity, gentleness, placability, love of one's neighbour, respect for human life, unselfishness, uprightness, submissiveness towards rulers and gentleness towards servants, beneficence and sympathy, especially towards Christian brethren, hatred of the bad, righteous judgment, but without quarrelsomeness, and with a readiness to reconcile adversaries, cordial love towards the teachers of the word. This is followed by a closing exhortation to make confession of sin, and to pray with a good conscience.

“The author of this book maintains a point of view peculiar to himself in the whole history of the adjustment of relations between Christianity and the Jewish religion. It is not that of Paul, nor that of John, nor of the Epistle to the Hebrews, nor yet that of Justin; nor, on the other hand, is it that of the Valentinian School and Marcion. As regards the literal sense of the law he is as radical as Marcion; indeed, actually more radical, for he holds the devil responsible for the literal sense of it. But in regard to the book (including the law), understood in a Christian sense, he is as conservative as it is possible to be” (Harnack). If the Epistle to the Hebrews compared Christianity with Judaism in order to exhibit the former as the perfect religion and the latter as the imperfect preliminary stage and shadowy prototype of the truth, Barnabas will not concede to Judaism even so much as that. It is

not for him an imperfect, but nevertheless relatively and temporarily true, preparatory stage of the true religion, but simply the perversion, the fleshly-minded misrepresentation of truth by a caricature, which stands on exactly the same footing as heathen error, and even had its origin in the same demonic lying spirit as heathenism (ix. 4, x. 9, xvi. 2). Nevertheless, for Barnabas, not less than for the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Old Testament is the Divine revelation and sole authority on which he seeks to base his teaching. Naturally, this is only possible by means of the boldest allegorisation and the most complete transformation of its historical sense. The Epistle to the Hebrews had also seen in Old Testament institutions outward symbols of the higher truth of Christianity, but it had at the same time justified these institutions as of temporary validity in their proper historical sense, and resting on a Divine revelation: the Epistle of Barnabas Christianises the Old Testament so completely, that it only admits the spiritual or Christian significance of its institutions as the meaning and content which they were designed to have from the first, while everything else—everything, that is, which constitutes the distinctive character of historical Judaism—is considered to be a human addition, which rests, not upon the revelation of God, but upon the suggestion of demons. From this position it was obviously but a short step to that of the heretical Gnostics, who held that Judaism and the Old Testament were the work of another and inferior God. But close as he came to the threshold of this error, Barnabas never crossed it. Both in his rejection of Judaism and his Christianisation of the Old Testament, he retains essentially the

standpoint of the Church as a whole ; in particular, his confident recognition of the Old Testament prophets as witnesses inspired by Christ and prophesying of Him finds its nearest parallels in the Gospel of John and the Epistles of Ignatius to the Magnesians (viii. 2, ix. 3) and Philadelphians (v. 2; ix. 2). When Barnabas warns his readers not to destroy the purity of their Christian faith by seeking to become proselytes of the Jewish Law (iii. 6), or that they must not be like those who say "their [the Jews'] covenant is also ours" (iv. 6), and must not, in the arrogant delusion that they have been already justified, withdraw themselves into isolation, but meeting together with the members of the church take counsel as to what is profitable to the common good (iv. 10)—all this implies very much the same circumstances, the syncretistic Jewish tendencies, and the separation of individuals within the Church which we find combated in the above-mentioned Ignatian letters. There also we find warnings against schismatics, especially against men who, without being Jews themselves, make much of Judaism and appeal to ancient archives, whereas the Christian's true archive is Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, through which the Patriarchs and Prophets are saved along with the Church, since the Gospel has added to the prophesying of the prophets the completion of incorruptibility,<sup>1</sup> through the appearance, the sufferings, and resurrection of the Saviour (*cf.* Barn. v. 6 f. with Ign., *ad Magn.* ix., x., and *ad Phil.* v., vi., viii., ix.). The whole Epistle of Barnabas might be described as the development of the theme

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* "the crowning point, viz. immortality" (ἀπαρτισμὰ ἀφθαρσίας).—TRANSLATOR.

which Ignatius formulates in *ad Magn.* x. 3: "It is foolish to take the name of Christ Jesus into the mouth and to Judaize, for Christianity has not come to believe on Judaism, but Judaism on Christianity." If we add to this the resemblances between *ad Magn.* v. 1 and Barn. xviii., xix. 1 (the Two Ways), and between *ad Magn.* vi. 1 (εἰς τύπον θεοῦ) and Barn. xix. 7 (ὡς τύπῳ θεοῦ), the conjecture forces itself upon us that the origin of the Epistle of Barnabas is to be sought in temporal and local proximity to that of these Ignatian letters. And this is confirmed by the following considerations.

As regards the time of composition, since iv. 4 f. is in all ways too obscure to allow us to base any certain conclusion on it, we have only to take account of xvi. 4. After citing the passage in Isa. xlix. 17, "Those who have destroyed this temple shall build it," the author continues, "That is coming to pass, for through their wars it has now been destroyed by their enemies; and now the workmen of the enemy will build it up." The author means, "As the prophecy of the destruction of the temple has been fulfilled, so in the near future will that of its restoration by the enemy come to fulfilment, but in quite a different sense from that desired by the Jews; it will arise, not as a Jewish but as a heathen temple." This must have been written at the time when Hadrian (according to Dio Cassius, lxix. 12) had begun to build the new city of Ælia Capitolina in place of the destroyed Jerusalem, and as part of the scheme had the definite intention of building a temple of Jupiter in place of the temple of Jahweh; that is to say, not long before the outbreak of the second Jewish war (132), the immediate occasion of which was the indignation of



the Jews about this building.<sup>1</sup> If, according to this, the Epistle of Barnabas was written about 130 A.D., the general circumstances of the time sufficiently explain why it shows the same harsh attitude towards Judaism, alongside of a conservative attitude towards the Old Testament, which we find in the Ignatian letters, dating from the same period, and the Fourth Gospel, which is only a little later. It was the embittered Jewish national feeling which came to expression in the second Jewish war that everywhere in Western Asia intensified the opposition between Jews and Christians till the breach became irreparable, and the syncretistic tendencies, which up to that time had doubtless often appeared, especially in Gnosticising circles in mixed churches consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, became thenceforth an impossibility. This is the critical turning-point at which we find ourselves in the Epistle of Barnabas as in the Ignatian Epistles to the Magnesians and Philadelphians, as also in the Fourth Gospel, which, by the way, was not known to the writer of this Epistle, a further proof that the Gospel cannot have been in existence by 130, for otherwise a teacher who was so much in sympathy with the Johannine conceptions would not have failed to make direct use of it. Even our canonical Gospel of Matthew can hardly have been known to Barnabas, and was certainly not recognised by him as holy Scripture, as

<sup>1</sup> This interpretation, which was suggested by Lipsius long ago in his article on the "Epistle of Barnabas" in Schenkel's *Bibellexikon*, has now been accepted by Harnack also, whose argument (*Chron.*, p. 424 ff.) is so convincing that the question may be considered to have been settled by it. He refers the situation to the year 130 or 131 (Lipsius puts it in 120-125, which is doubtless a little too early).

some have too hastily concluded from iv. 14. For if so, how could he have placed the appearances of the risen Christ and the ascension on the same day as the resurrection (xv. 9, contrary to Matt. xxviii. 16), and how could he have asserted (xii. 10) that Jesus was only the Son of God, not the Son of Man or Son of David? This view could not have been taken from any of our Synoptic Gospels, not even from Matthew, where, as well as Son of God, Christ is called Son of Man and Son of David, this other side of His nature being deliberately emphasised (vol. ii. p. 469). In view of this arbitrary setting aside of the Synoptic tradition, which finds a parallel only in the Fourth Gospel, it is quite inconceivable that Barnabas in iv. 14 quoted the passage in Matt. xxii. 14 as holy Scripture (*ὡς γέγραπται*): this formula of quotation suffices to prove that the author did not take this saying from a gospel-writing, which no one at that early date was accustomed to consider and quote as canonical scripture, but from an Old Testament or apocryphal (apocalyptic) book.

Who the author of this book was, we have no means of knowing, as he does not give his name, nor can we tell how the name of Barnabas became traditionally associated with it. It is possible that this was really the author's name; it was a common name, and a Hellenistic Christian of the second century may just as well have been called Barnabas as James or John without needing to be therefore at once identified with the famous bearer of this name in Apostolic times. If, on the other hand, the name was first affixed to the letter by tradition, then it is certainly the Barnabas of Acts, the missionary companion of Paul, who is meant. But if so, it remains

an insoluble enigma how tradition could go so far astray in its choice of the fictitious author as to make this Jewish Levite and scrupulous legalist (*cf.* Gal. ii. 13) the author of a harshly anti-Jewish Epistle. But, after all, Church tradition is everywhere so rich in difficulties of this kind (behind which, as a rule, there is some accident of local legend) that there is no reason to linger over it. From the contents of the letter it is impossible to conclude with certainty whether the author was by race a Jew or a Gentile. In favour of the first, there is his accurate acquaintance with the Old Testament and with the allegorical and typological method of interpretation which was customary in the Rabbinic Schools; in favour of the latter it may be urged that the sweeping condemnation of the Jewish ritual system is more difficult to understand as coming from a born Jew than from a Gentile Christian, and that the author seems to allude to his earlier heathen condition in xvi. 7, where he says that before we came to believe in God the habitation of our heart was corruptible and weak like a temple built with hands, full of idolatry, and a dwelling-place of demons, because we were doing what was contrary to God. But the author is speaking here not of himself in particular, but of Christendom as a whole, and this passage is therefore no proof of his having formerly been a heathen. And as regards his bitter anti-Judaism, that is perhaps even more easily explained by a breach with Judaism than by his having been originally a Gentile. However, the whole question is of little importance. The author was in any case a Christian of Hellenistic education, perhaps born within the Church, in any case occupying a Christian

point of view from which the opposition between heathenism and Judaism had become unimportant.

The theological complexion of the author's thought is the same Gnosticising deutero-Paulinism which finds expression in Hebrews, Colossians, and Ephesians, and in the Ignatian letters. If Barnabas does not, like Ignatius, conduct a polemic against the Gnostic Docetists, the conclusion to be drawn from that is, not that he was further removed in point of time from Gnosticism than Ignatius, but that he was closer to it in spirit, and therefore considered it more innocent, than the passionate bishop of Antioch, whose own theology had, for all that, plenty of Gnostic elements. That Barnabas' condemnation of Judaism as an error of demonic origin stands on the very threshold of the Gnostic dualism, has been remarked above. His Christology, again, is not precisely docetic, but yet comes nearer to the Gnostic doctrine of the God-Christ than would, at a later date, have been possible for a Church teacher. Christ is, according to Barnabas, only the Son of God, the pre-existent creator of the world, and author of the prophetic revelation in the Old Testament, who was subsequently, so far as the outward form goes, revealed in the flesh, in order to make His Divine splendour apprehensible by human eyes, and by His sufferings and death to show (guarantee) the victory over death and corruption; but he was not the son of a man, and therefore not a son of David (xii. 10, v. 6, 10). According to this, Barnabas seems to have regarded the incarnation as the assumption of a real human body, but not by means of a human birth. The human body was only the form of appearance (*τύπος*), foreign to the Son of God, by which He veiled His splendour and carried

through the drama of redemption without Himself becoming truly man—a view which is only slightly distinguished from Gnostic Docetism, but which had certainly not yet been felt to be heretical even within the Church. In the strong emphasis which he lays upon the death of Christ as the central means of redemption, Barnabas, like Ignatius, follows in the footsteps of Paul. Christ suffered for our sakes only, in order by His death to make us alive, to sanctify us through the forgiveness of sins, to renew and to transform us, to cancel death and to prove the resurrection, that He might take up His abode in our hearts as in a holy temple; and, on the other hand, the purpose of His sufferings was to fill up the measure of the Jews' sins (v. 1, 6, 11; vi. 11, 14 f.; vii. 2, xvi. 8). Therefore, alongside of its redemptive efficacy for believers, the death of Christ results in a judgment upon the unbelieving world—a Johannine thought. The covenant of God, of which the Jews have never been in possession because they made themselves unworthy of it by their sin during the giving of the Law at Sinai, has been sealed as the covenant of the beloved (Son) Jesus in the hearts of Christians in virtue of the hope belonging to faith in Him (iv. 8). Faith is therefore essentially hope in the promises of the new covenant; and indeed hope is called "the beginning and end of our faith" (i. 6). Helpers of our faith are the Christian virtues, which spontaneously fulfil the "new law which is without yoke of compulsion" (ii. 2, 6). Faith, however, receives its completion through "gnosis," which refers to things past, present, and future, and which makes men capable of the safe offerings of the pious fear of God (i. 5 ff.). There is a special kind of "gnosis" relating to the

details of the ethical life, which is described in the last chapter. The strong emphasis here laid on the ethical side of Christianity is nevertheless widely removed from Jewish legalism, for the freedom of the new law from the yoke of compulsion, and the Christians' privilege of making laws for themselves and being taught of God (ii. 6, xxi. 4, 6), are represented in a thoroughly evangelical fashion; and with the "dwelling of the Lord in the temple of the heart," the note of ethical mysticism is struck (vi. 15, xvi. 8) in which Pauline, Hellenistic, and Johannine Christianity harmoniously concur.

POPULAR CHURCH WRITINGS OF AN EDIFYING  
CHARACTER

CHAPTER XIX

THE "TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES"  
(The *Didache*)

THIS document, which was discovered by the Metropolitan Bryennios in the Jerusalem Convent at Constantinople and published in 1883, has, even in the short period which has elapsed since then, called forth a flood of treatises and essays dealing with problems of interpretation and criticism, with the investigation of its sources, the time of its origin, and its theological and ecclesiastical standpoint. From the at first apparently hopeless chaos of opinions some few fixed points have now emerged about which there seems to be a growing consensus of opinion among the most competent critics, though we are still far from having arrived at finally established results, either in regard to the question of sources or to the time of composition and character of this remarkable writing; and indeed we can scarcely hope to arrive at assured results unless some further source-material connected with the *Didache* should come to light.

The difficulty in the criticism of the *Didache*

depends partly on the two peculiarly diverse elements of which it consists, and partly on the unusually complicated relationship between it and other writings of the Early Church. The contents include two parts of quite different character—general moral instruction (i.–vi.), and a number of regulations regarding church ceremonies and questions about the inner organisation of church life (vii.–xv.). The conclusion (chapter xvi.) consists of an eschatological prediction. The first part sets forth, under the figure of the “Two Ways”—the way of life and the way of death—a description of the virtuous and the vicious life. At the beginning (i. 2) come the love of God and the love of one’s neighbour, the latter accompanied by a negative version of the “Golden rule”—“Whatsoever thou wouldst not have happen to thee, do not thou do to another.” This is there developed in detail, in two sections, each marked by a superscription (i. 3 and ii. 1). First in i. 3 ff. there are exhortations, almost in the words of the Sermon on the Mount, to love of enemies, temperance, non-resistance; and in i. 5, following Hermas (*Mand.* ii.), there is an exhortation to general beneficence, to which there is added in i. 6 a limitation in a curious quotation from an unknown source.<sup>1</sup> Then follows in chapter ii., with the heading, “Sacred Commandment of the Teaching,” an enumeration of grave sins of act, word, and thought, closing in ii. 7 with the exhortation to hate no man, but to reprove some and have mercy on others, to pray for others, and to love others “more

<sup>1</sup> “But it has also been said concerning this, ‘Let thine alms sweat into thy hands until thou knowest to whom thou givest.’”—  
TRANSLATOR.



than thine own soul." In chapter iii. there is a warning against sins of a less gross character, wrath, impure desires, soothsaying, lying and avarice, murmuring and slander; and an exhortation to meekness, long-suffering, mercifulness, kindness, humility and submissiveness to the will of God. Chapter iv. deals in a more detailed way with various circumstances of life. The teachers of the word are to be honoured and are to engage in daily and peaceful intercourse with the saints; towards the poor ungrudging beneficence is to be shown; children are to be brought up in the fear of God, and slaves are not to be treated harshly, since their hope is in the same God who without respect of persons calls all who are prepared by the Spirit. The close of this description of the Two Ways (iv. 12-14) is formed by the religious duties; avoidance of hypocrisy and all that is displeasing to God, faithful keeping of His commandments, without adding to them or taking from them, confession of sin in the church, and offering of prayer with a good conscience. Chapter v. contains the description of the Way of Death, an enumeration of sins of various degrees of grossness. Finally, chapter vi. offers an epilogue to this moral teaching. After a warning against deceivers, there follows in verse 2 the remarkable statement: "If thou canst bear the whole yoke of the law thou shalt be perfect; but if thou canst not, what thou canst, that do"; and verse 3 adds by way of explanation of this: "In regard to food, bear what thou canst; but against what is offered to idols be indeed on thy guard, for it is idolatry."

The second part of the *Didache* begins in chapter

vii. with the regulations for baptism. It is connected with what goes before by the words (vii. 1): "After you have first rehearsed all these things, baptize into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in living (*i.e.* running) water." That is to say, the moral lessons regarding the "Two Ways" are indicated as the content of a course of catechetical instruction preceding baptism. Then follow directions about the method of baptism and about the preliminary fasting to be observed by the person who was to administer baptism and the candidate. Chapter viii. contains instructions for Christian fasting and prayer, in contradistinction to that of the hypocrites (the Jews). The Lord's Prayer is to be repeated thrice daily (in Matthew's form, and with the conclusion, which is absent in the Gospel text). In chapters ix. and x. are given prayers before and after the Eucharist, of a very early character. There is thanksgiving for the natural food which the Creator has given to all men as well as for the spiritual nourishment and the eternal life which He has bestowed upon us through His servant (*παῖς*) Jesus Christ; a petition for the deliverance of the Church from all evil and for the perfecting of it in God's love and the gathering together of the Church, when sanctified, into the Kingdom of God which has been prepared for it. Chapters xi.-xiii. explain how, "according to the Gospel ordinance," the Church is to behave towards itinerant apostles, prophets, and other Christians, and give the marks of the true and false prophets. Chapter xiv. treats of the worship of God on the "Lord's Day"; in order that the Eucharist may be pure it is to be preceded by confession, and reconciliation of brethren

who are at variance. Chapter xv. deals with the choice of bishops and deacons, their personal qualification, and their official position alongside of the prophets and teachers. Then follows (xv. 3) a prescription for conduct towards the shortcomings of members of the church, and in xv. 4 a general exhortation to the orderly performance of church ceremonies. The closing chapter, xvi., begins with an exhortation, recalling Barnabas iv. 9, to watchfulness and readiness in view of the Lord's return. The signs preceding it are described on the lines of Matthew's Gospel, though the many false Messiahs there mentioned are united in a single "world-deceiver," who, like a son of God, will do unheard-of miracles. The return of the Lord will be preceded first by a sign in heaven, then by a trumpet blast, and thirdly by the resurrection of the saints, but not of all men. Then shall the world see the Lord coming on the clouds of heaven.

The question whether the *Didache*, in the form in which the newly-discovered manuscript gives it, is an originally united whole, was at first answered in the affirmative by the editor and by the first commentator, Harnack, but is decided in the negative by Hilgenfeld and Krawutzky, who had previously suggested the existence of a separate treatise on the "Two Ways." Now, the original unity of the *Didache* is given up by most critics, including Harnack himself, and it is recognised to have been pieced together out of an earlier treatise on the Two Ways, which is contained in i. 1 f. and ii.-vi., and a later part which contains the regulations for church life (vii.-xvi.). We are, in fact, forced to this conclusion by a comparison between the *Didache* and the Epistle of Barnabas,

and with the expanded paraphrase of it in the seventh book of the so-called Apostolic Constitutions; and by the parallels which the Church order of the fourth century offers to the first four chapters of the *Didache*, and the parallel between a recently discovered Latin fragment and the first two chapters (with the exception, in both cases, of i. 3-6). In the Epistle of Barnabas, xviii.-xx., this teaching about the Two Ways is found in a form which makes it appear equally impossible that it is taken from the *Didache*, or, on the other hand, served as a model for the latter. For on the former hypothesis it would be inconceivable (1) why Barnabas should have changed the relatively orderly arrangement of his model into disorder; (2) why he should have left out just the passage in i. 3-6 which contains sayings from the New Testament; (3) why he should in iv. 9 f. have taken out of chapter xvi. the single verse (2) in that passage which is not taken from a Biblical source; (4) a further point which tells against the priority of the *Didache* appears in comparing this passage in the two writings, viz. that Barnabas believed the end of all things to have already begun ( $\nu\hat{\nu}\nu$ ), whereas the *Didache* no longer shared this lively expectation of the imminent end ( $\nu\hat{\nu}\nu$  is absent). But that, on the other side, Barnabas was not the model for the *Didache* appears from the parallels B. xix. 10 = *Did.* iv. 2 and 6, B. xix. 11 = *Did.* iv. 13; B. xix. 4 = *Did.* iii. 3, in which the better connection and the clear meaning is on the side of the *Didache*. In these circumstances the only hypothesis that remains open is that both writers have independently drawn from a third source, and that therefore the allegory of the Two Ways existed even before Barnabas in an

earlier recension. This is confirmed by three further arguments. (1) The manner in which the teaching about the Two Ways is introduced in Barn. xviii. 1 makes the impression that the latter originally closed with chapter xvii. and that an appendix not originally belonging to it has been added.<sup>1</sup> (2) The section of the *Didache* i. 3-6 which is lacking in Barnabas is lacking also in the parallel in the Apostolic Constitutions and in the Latin fragment. As these are not dependent on Barnabas, their agreement in omitting the same section is only explicable by the hypothesis that all three were acquainted with an older recension of the Two Ways in which this section was lacking. (3) Even in the *Didache* itself this section may be recognised as a later interpolation in an originally simpler text. This is the only explanation of the two headings i. 3 and ii. 1. The attempt to show that these are original and that i. 3-6 is the development of the command to love God, while in ii. 1 the command to love one's neighbour is introduced, makes shipwreck on irreconcilable facts, since the love of enemies (i. 3) and beneficence (i. 5), as well as the corresponding exhortations in ii. 7, iii. 7 f., iv. 5-8, belong to love of one's neighbour, while, on the other hand, the warning against idolatry and blasphemy and the exhortation to submission to God and the fulfilling of church duties (iii. and iv. 12 ff.) belong directly to the love of God.

However desirable it might be to have some further information about the source which must be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. on this point, and on the subject generally, Holtzmann's essay in the *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.*, 1885, p. 160, and Bratke, *ibid.*, 1886, p. 302 f.

assumed to underlie the first part of the *Didache*, as regards its date and the *milieu* in which it originated, we must be content to admit that so far we know nothing certain about it. The hypothesis was brought forward by Taylor<sup>1</sup> and accepted by Harnack<sup>2</sup> that the allegory of the Two Ways was originally Jewish, and was intended for the instruction of proselytes. The arguments alleged in favour of this hypothesis are: the absence of specifically Christian characteristics and Gospel sayings, the fact that the statement of the theme in i. 2 is not given in the Gospel form, and the numerous parallels between this document and Jewish Palestinian and Hellenistic literature. While these arguments are undoubtedly deserving of consideration, no certain conclusion can be drawn from them, for resemblances to Jewish and Hellenistic literature are found everywhere in early Christian writings. And if there are no direct Gospel quotations in the development of the theme, yet the theme itself, the combination of love of God and love of one's neighbour, is genuinely evangelical, and the fact that the "golden rule" is given in a divergent form can prove nothing, in view of the numerous versions of it. The saying in iv. 10, that God's call is not with respect of persons, does not sound like Jewish particularism and pride of ancestry, but, rather, Christian universalism and an ethical valuation of personality. In general I should be

<sup>1</sup> *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, with illustrations from the Talmud. By Charles Taylor, D.D. Cambridge, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Apostellehre und die jüdischen beiden Wege*, 2nd ed., p. 14. In the *Chronologie*, p. 437, Harnack leaves it an open question whether the primitive form of the "Two Ways" was Jewish or Christian.

inclined to put against the objection that specifically Christian elements are wanting, the opposite objection that specifically Jewish materials are even more noticeably lacking in these five chapters. And if it is suggested that this element is found in vi. 2, "If thou canst bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou shalt be perfect; but if thou canst not, do at least what thou canst," we may recall the teaching of Hermas about the twofold basis of ethics (*sup.*, p. 289).<sup>1</sup> And when this exhortation is illustrated in verse 5 by the counsel about foods, it may be interpreted as a reference to Christian asceticism just as well as to the Jewish dietetic laws; indeed, the parallel in Barn. xix. 8 seems to make the former the more probable. Harnack, it is true, conjectures that in the original text other Jewish ceremonial regulations may have come in at this point (vi. 3), but it is quite inadmissible to build on a bare possibility of this kind. However, when all is said, I am of opinion that the decision of this question is not of any great importance. For, supposing that the original treatise on the Two Ways was Jewish, the only conclusion that could be drawn from that would be that Hellenistic Judaism had freed itself from specifically Jewish limitations to such a degree and had raised itself to such purity and liberality of ethical teaching as was hardly to be distinguished from that of Christianity. If, on the other hand, the original document was

<sup>1</sup> And also 2 Clem. vii. 3, *Εἰ μὴ δυνάμεθα πάντες στεφανωθῆναι, κἄν ἐγγὺς τοῦ στεφάνου γενώμεθα* ("If we cannot all be crowned, let us at least come near the crown"), and Barn. xix. 8, *ὅσον δύνασαι, ὑπερ τῆς ψυχῆς σου ἀγρεύσεις* ("So far as thou canst, be pure for thy soul's sake"). The work of supererogation formed part from the first (Matt. xix. 20 f.) of Catholic morality.

Christian, that only confirms what we already know from Hermas and James, that in Catholic Christianity the Hellenistic basis continued to make itself felt, and in some respects exercised a preponderant influence.

As regards the expansion of the primitive document of the Two Ways into the *Didache* by the addition of i. 3-6 and chapters vii. to xvi., that must have been later than Barnabas and Hermas. Later than Barnabas, for the author of xvi. 2, as has been remarked above, without doubt knew Barn. iv. 9 f., and not *vice versa*. Later than Hermas, for the exhortation to beneficence in i. 5 is obviously an allusion to Herm., *Mand.* ii. 4-6, where the motive is given in practically the same words; indeed, the allusion becomes an actual quotation, since the words "blessed is he who gives according to the commandment" point directly to *Mand.* ii. 7, where it is said "keep these commandments [of indiscriminate beneficence] as I have told thee." But while Hermas held that in giving one was not to think first who deserved it and who not, this went too far for the author of the *Didache*, and he finds it needful to balance one authority with another according to which the alms are to remain in one's hand until one knows to whom one is giving (i. 6). Further, the description of the true and false prophets in xi. 7-12 recalls the similar description in *Mand.* xi. 7, 12, 16, and *Sim.* ix. 25. Another thing that recalls Hermas is the way in which in the *Didache* the prophets and teachers are specially distinguished, and made superior to the bishops and deacons in spiritual rank. From this, and from the absence of a monarchical episcopate, some critics have thought it necessary to ascribe a



very early date to the *Didache*. But in this connection Harnack<sup>1</sup> rightly recommends caution: "For most of the provinces we know nothing at all of the stages of development of early Christianity within the Empire into Catholic Christianity, and for none of them do we know it completely. But on the other hand we have reason to suppose that in most of the provinces very primitive conditions were long maintained, and then suddenly changed almost at a stroke. Our document may therefore be later in point of time than Clement, Hermas, and the Ignatian letters, even though one must take it as representing an earlier stage if one is undertaking to describe the history of the development of Catholicism out of the original conditions." That the *Didache* in the form in which we have it is not likely to have appeared much before the middle of the second century is proved not only by its relation to Barnabas and Hermas, but also by internal evidence. From xi. 7-12 it seems that serious corruption had already set in among the prophets, so that it was difficult to distinguish between true and false prophets, and it was necessary to appeal to the example of the "old prophets," that is to say, the Christian prophets of a past generation, in order to justify the doubtful conduct of the present prophets (xi. 11).<sup>2</sup> The regulations for prayer and fasting (vii., viii.) point to cultural customs which are in process of

<sup>1</sup> *Die Apostellehre und die jüdischen beiden Wege*, 2nd ed., p. 23. Cf. the remarks of Lightfoot quoted earlier (vol. iii. p. 398 f.) about the difference in the development of episcopacy in East and West.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently prophecy by symbolic action (cf. Agabus in Acts xxi. 11) is in view, and the danger thought of is magic-mongering.—

fixation, which is no doubt a mark of a later period (second half of the second century): that the enthusiasm of the primitive Christian period is in process of disappearing, is shown by the weakening down of the ethical demands, and the admission of a dual plane of morality (i., vi.), and the absence of Chiliastic pictures of the future (xvi.). Since Clement of Alexandria not only several times tacitly uses the *Didache* but also once (*Strom.*, I. xx. 100) cites it as holy Scripture, its date must be placed between 150 and 170. Its place of origin was most probably Egypt.

The theological standpoint of the *Didache* is "that of the popular Gentile Christianity of the earlier period, in the form in which it arose out of Jewish Hellenism by the addition of faith in Jesus Christ and some Gospel sayings and ordinances; and the author is indeed a classical witness for that standpoint, because he has imported almost nothing that is individual" (Harnack). The ethical ideal of the *Didache* finds its nearest parallels in James and Hermas; its religious attitude, which is expressed especially in the beautiful Eucharistic prayers, corresponds most closely with that of 2 Clement. In both, Christianity appears as the truth made known by Jesus Christ, namely, the knowledge of the true God and Holy Father and the certainty of immortality and of the eternal heavenly life (ix. 3, x. 2 f.). In both, the Church is gathered from all the ends of the earth by the call of the Word of God, by which He has caused to dawn upon us the light of the knowledge of Him, or has made His light to dwell in our hearts (ix. 4, x. 2). In both, the Church has as its destiny, which is to be brought to fulfilment by God's power, to be freed from all evil

and made perfect in the love of God—in short, to become holy, because only on this condition can it enter into the Kingdom of God which is destined for it, or into eternal life, the grace (gracious gift) of which will be manifested when this (material) world has passed away (x. 4–6). The means to the fulfilment of this destiny are baptism and the Eucharist, confession, fasting and prayer. Baptism is administered (vii. 2) in (into) the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (and by its adherence to the God who is revealed in this name and the hope of His promise is assured, sealed, for which reason baptism is spoken of by Clement and Hermas as a seal). The Eucharist appears in two aspects. On the one hand it is the sacrifice of the Church, the value of which depends on the Church's purity as conditioned by the forgiveness of sin, and upon unalloyed love of the brethren. In this self-offered sacrifice of an ethically purified and united Christian Church is contained the ideal and universal fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial system (xiv.). On the other hand, the Eucharist is the gracious gift of "spiritual food" by which eternal life is communicated, as temporal life is by ordinary food (x. 3). This is the view already known to us from John and the Ignatian letters, which looks on the Lord's Supper as a Christian celebration of the mysteries, serving as "the medicine of immortality." If this view goes back to the Pauline interpretation of the Lord's Supper as a fellowship with the body and blood of Christ, yet the specifically Pauline conception of a celebration of the atoning death of Christ for the forgiveness of sins is here lacking, and its place is occupied by the sole thought of the guarantee of life, in which the resemblance to

the Hellenistic Mystery-teaching is not to be mistaken. We are reminded of 1 Cor. x. 17 by the symbolical interpretation of the loaf, which is composed of many scattered grains, as a symbol of the unity of the Church which is gathered out of all the world (ix. 4). The aids to virtue, fasting, and prayer are subjected to ecclesiastical regulation by the appointment of days and times (vii., viii.) on the analogy of the Jewish custom, but with an express distinction between the new Christian custom and that of the "hypocrites," as the Jews are roundly designated. That recalls the way in which the Jews are spoken of in 2 Clement (ii. 3) as those "who think they have God," or the way the Jews in the Gospel of John think they are the children of Abraham and of God but really have the devil for their father (viii. 39 ff.), or the way the Jews in Barnabas think they have the law of God, but in truth, deceived by a demon, have perverted its spiritual sense into a literal one. For all these writers, accounts have long ago been settled with the Jewish religion and nation; Christianity is the sole true and universal religion, predicted in advance in the Old Testament by the prophets under the inspiration of Christ, and perfectly revealed in the Gospel as the sole valid truth which alone leads to life, so that Judaism has in relation to it no further significance or rights.

## THE CLEMENTINE WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XX

#### CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS AND "SECOND CLEMENT"

THE letter of the Roman Church to the Corinthian Church which has come down to us under the title of the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, the text of which has only been published in a complete form in recent times, is one of the most important witnesses for the development of the faith and life of the Gentile Christian churches in the post-apostolic decades. It begins with a description of the earlier happy condition of the Corinthian Church, to which its present disorder, due to ambitious and envious disturbers of the peace, offers a melancholy contrast. It is just these vices of envy and ambition which, from the beginning of the world to the latest sufferings of the persecuted churches, have been the roots of all evils. The writer then calls upon those who have gone astray, to return to a Christian frame of mind, pointing to the precious blood of Christ as the means of grace offered to all the world to bring men to repentance, and recalls the preaching of repentance by Noah, Jonah, and other ministers of the Divine grace, and also examples

of piety from sacred history. Only to the humble does Christ belong—He who came down to earth as the Sceptre of the Divine Majesty, yet not in pride and splendour, as he might have done, but in humility. And we are also urged to peaceable conduct by the example of God, who in the creation and maintenance of the whole world shows Himself everywhere the God of order, of peace and harmony, of goodness and long-suffering. In order to be worthy of His beneficence we must in all the circumstances of life maintain good conduct and discipline. This is confirmed by the faith which is in Christ, who through the Holy Spirit of the Psalmist has given us exhortations directed to this end. A further motive is the thought of the resurrection, the certainty of which is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus and by natural analogies of various kinds, especially that of the miraculous bird the phoenix. Since God is faithful in His promises, and inescapable in His judgments, we, whom He has made His chosen possession, ought to lift up holy hands to Him, to love Him as our kind and merciful Father, to shun the sins of fleshly lust and high-mindedness, and to show ourselves righteous by works, not by words. In order to become partakers in the blessing of God we must give heed to the means and ways of attaining it as they have been shown to us by Old Testament examples. Like all the Patriarchs, we also who are called in Christ Jesus are justified not by ourselves, or our own wisdom or goodness, or the works which we do with holy purpose, but by the will of God and by faith. But we are not for that reason to become negligent in well-doing and in love, but with zeal and joyfulness to strive to fulfil every good work. If

God Himself has in the creation adorned Himself with good works, so must we, who are made after His image, work the works of righteousness with all our might. The angelic host which serves His will in priestly fashion may also be for us a model in this. Great and manifold are the promised gifts of God; we shall become partakers of them when our purpose is loyally directed towards God, when we strive to attain that which is well-pleasing to Him, when we follow the way of truth. That is the way in which we have found our salvation, Jesus Christ, the High-priest of our sacrifice, the advocate and helper of our weakness, through whom our darkened mind has been illuminated with His marvellous light, and we have been given to taste immortal knowledge. After these general exhortations to a life of Christian piety, the author returns (chapter xxxvii.) to the special circumstances which gave rise to the letter, the quarrels in the Corinthian Church, and exhorts to peace, pointing to the examples of military subordination and the harmonious relation of the members of the body; even so, in the Church as the body of Christ, every one shall serve his neighbour according to his particular gift, without vainglorying, in thankfulness towards God, who is the bestower of all gifts. The Old Testament organisation of priests and sacrifices may teach us that it is God's will that each member of the Church should abide in his own proper place and order. So it was in the Church from the beginning. Christ had His commission from God, the Apostles from Christ, the bishops and deacons from the Apostles, or later, from other respected men with the consent of the whole Church. Therefore those who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ

ought not to be removed from their office. It is only sinners who have always persecuted the righteous; but we who have one God, one Christ, one Spirit of Grace, ought not to rend the body of Christ by seditions. The author then reminds the Corinthian Church of the censure which Paul long ago in his (first) letter meted out to them for their factions. And at that time it was, after all, Apostles or men approved by the Apostles to whom they had attached themselves; but now it is indeed shameful that the old and tried Corinthian Church should be at strife with its presbyters because of one or two persons. Therefore they are to pray that God will forgive them and re-establish brotherly love among them, the excellency of which is beyond description, which unites us with God, covers a multitude of sins, and without which it is impossible to please God, in which all the righteous are made perfect, through which Christ Himself joined us to Himself and gave His blood for us. It is better to confess one's sins than to harden one's heart, better to sacrifice oneself, as many heroes have done for their people, than to bring the Church into confusion. Only the humble who submit to the will of God will be profited by the compassionate intercessory remembrance of them before God and the saints. Only he who in humility fulfils the commandments given by God shall be adjudged and chosen to be among the number of those who are being saved through Jesus. On this follows (chapter lix.) a prayer which stands in no direct connection with the special purpose of the letter, and reads almost like a liturgical church-prayer, the oldest thing of this kind which has come down to us from the early days of the Christian Church. After the



petition for the preservation of the elect follows an ascription of praise to God the creator and ruler of the world, the helper in all distress, the saviour of the despairing, who, through His beloved child Christ has chosen from among all nations us who love Him, has instructed us, sanctified us, and brought us to honour. His help is besought for all the afflicted, the humble, the fallen, the needy, the sick, the erring, the hungry, the prisoners, the faint-hearted, and the weak; as the merciful, He is besought to forgive the sins and transgressions of His servants and hand-maids, to purify us through His truth, and to guide our steps, that we may walk in holiness of heart and do what is good and well-pleasing to God and human rulers. Then follows a petition on behalf of rulers, as those who are ordained by God, whom Christians feel themselves bound by the will of God to obey. May the Heavenly King direct their counsels to good, that they may exercise the power entrusted to them conscientiously, peaceably, and with clemency, and obtain God's grace. The prayer ends with a solemn doxology to the Almighty Giver of this and all other good gifts, through the High Priest and Advocate of our souls, Jesus Christ. Finally, in chapter lxii. ff., the most important contents of the letter are recapitulated, and the readers are urgently requested to lay to heart the exhortation to Christian unity.

In order to arrive at a right estimate of this letter, it must, above all, be kept in view that it is not a didactic theological treatise but a practical hortatory appeal, the purpose of which is to call to order a Church in which disorders had occurred, not in consequence of differences of doctrine but of personal

rivalries, for which, as it would seem, the self-exaltation of certain persons who boasted of their ascetic sanctity and other charismatic excellences was to blame.<sup>1</sup> The letter transports us to a period in the youth of the Church when the principles of church order, discipline, and ethics were beginning to take up the struggle against the dangerous extravagances of spiritual enthusiasm and subjectivity which so easily arose out of the ardour of faith and the ascetic zeal of a young Church. This being the situation, it followed as a matter of course that the emphasis was laid on the significance of Christianity as an ethical discipline, while the dogmatic theory was partly relegated to the background, partly adapted to, and made serviceable for, this practical purpose. There are, no doubt, many theological statements in the Epistle of Clement, but they are not there for

<sup>1</sup> The attempts to construct, from Clement's exhortations, by interpreting them as allusions to particular events in Corinth, a definite picture of the condition of the Church there, are quite hopeless; if only because in many particulars no such allusion is possible (*e.g.*, in the catalogue of domestic virtues in chapter xxi.). The author has rather used the particular occasion of the Corinthian troubles in order to draw a general picture, applicable also to his own church, of Christian faith and life, and in doing so has incorporated some homiletic material of the kind which he was accustomed to use in his addresses at the meetings of the church for worship. But, on the other hand, that is no reason for holding his letter to be a homily, or a loose combination of various homiletic essays; there is too much unity in it for that, and the constantly recurring reference to the definite occasion marks it as a real letter. In some parts, as, for example, in the discussion of the resurrection (chapter xxiv.) the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians may have served as the model for our author. However, here as elsewhere, we ought, in my opinion, to guard against under-estimating the originality of the teachers of the Early Church.

their own sakes, but everywhere serve as the religious motives for ethical exhortations, or as the expression of devotional feeling. The author's fundamental view of Christianity is, according to the characteristic passage in lix. 3, that God has instructed, sanctified, and brought to honour, us His people chosen from among all nations, through His beloved son Jesus Christ. It is not so much a putting away of the sense of guilt nor a redemption from the bondage of the law, as the *education* of those who before were alienated from God in heathen blindness, into a sanctified people of God, conscious of their dignity as such. The means to this are, in the first instance, the illumination of the ignorant, darkened mind of the heathen by the light of the true knowledge of God (xxxvi. 2; lix. 2, 4); next, the ethical example of the Old and New Testament saints and the ethical exhortations of the Old Testament scriptures; finally, the greatness of the Divine promises, especially the comforting hope of immortality.

It is obvious at the first glance that this conception of Christianity is no longer exactly that of the Apostle Paul. But nothing could be more absurd than to try to explain it as a departure from Paulinism due to Judaising tendencies or influences, for there is no trace of anything of the kind in the whole letter. On the contrary, the author's whole type of Christian thought has obviously been formed only on the Pauline letters and the Epistle to the Hebrews. He expressly adopts the fundamental idea of Paulinism in the domain of practical religion: the universality of the Divine grace as the ground of salvation and the motive of Christian ethics. But this fundamental Pauline idea naturally took on

another aspect in the mind of Gentile Christians from that which it had borne for Paul the pupil of the Pharisees. For them grace no longer stood as it did for him, sharply opposed to law; they had never, like the legalist Pharisee, felt the curse of the law, and could not therefore share his longing for redemption from the bondage of the law. For the Gentile Christian the law, like the rest of the Old Testament, possesses a positive value as an instrument of the will of God which educates us to salvation, an instrument which, understood and applied with Christian freedom, is still serviceable to the Christian People of God. For him, therefore, Christ's death is not a means of expiation to redeem us from the curse of the law, but a means of grace to awaken repentance in all men. His interest is no longer attached to the atonement made once for all, the justification in principle, but to the constantly recurring forgiveness of daily sins and weaknesses. Faith is no longer contrasted with works of the law, but as a religious frame of mind is one with love and obedience to the will of God, and therefore with a sanctified spirit and conduct. In all this we have to see, not an abandonment of Paulinism, nor a declension from or perversion of it in consequence of a superficial misunderstanding of it, but a thoroughly natural and healthy *development* of it in the direction pointed to by the Epistle to the Hebrews—a development which must necessarily arise in Gentile Christian circles, where, with the disappearance of the special presuppositions and polemical interests of Paul, the understanding of his theology, with its peculiarly individual stamp, begins to be lost, while at the same time, in view of the pressing practical need of

guidance for members of the Church, the interest in the ethically educative side of the Old and New Testament revelation inevitably increases. This secondary Paulinism became the prevailing tendency in the Gentile Christianity of the second century and formed the basis of union in the Church, for it had already overcome the antithesis of the Pauline period; it had smoothed down the asperities of the original Pauline teaching which were offensive to Jewish Christians, but without sacrificing any of the gains which Paulinism had won, and without in the slightest degree endorsing, or compromising with, narrow-minded national and ritualistic Judaism. For that reason it is a decided mistake, and can only throw obstacles in the way of an unprejudiced judgment, when the sole question put to the writings of this epoch is whether they are Pauline or Jewish-Christian. This question, as experience proves, can never receive a clear and decided answer, because it is wrongly put. It presupposes an alternative which for that period no longer existed with this kind of definiteness; it fails to recognise that the Paulinism of the second century was not the Paulinism of Paul himself, any more than the Jewish Christianity of the period was still that of the Galatian Judaizers. Deutero-Paulinism is simply the form which the original Paulinism took, and was bound to take, in the process of adaptation to the conditions of life in the Gentile-Christian Church.

When, after thus getting our bearings in regard to the general standpoint of Clement, we turn to some particulars, the first point that deserves our attention is certainly the christology. Closely following the Epistle to the Hebrews, Clement in chapter xxxvi.

speaks of Christ as being the refulgence of the majesty of God, as highly exalted above the angels as the son stands above the servants. He sits on the right hand of God, who has given to Him the nations for His inheritance and the earth for His possession. If what is primarily in view here is the glory of the exalted Christ, other passages as clearly teach the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ. In xvi. 2 it is said that, although as the sceptre (-bearer) of the majesty of God He might have come in pomp and splendour, He did not do so, but came in humility. As this "coming" means the earthly appearing of Christ, the possibility of another and prouder mode of appearance implies that Christ had the choice of the mode in which He should appear, and therefore that before His earthly appearance He pre-existed as a personal spirit in a higher form of existence. The thought of this passage is therefore exactly the same as that of Phil. ii. 5 f. and 2 Cor. viii. 9. In both cases the incarnation of Christ is thought of as an act of voluntary self-humiliation and as an example of unselfish humility. That Clement thought of the pre-existent Christ as the author of the inspiration of Scripture is shown by xxii. 1, where a Psalm passage is introduced with the words: "Christ exhorts us by the Holy Spirit thus, 'hearken unto me, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.'" As the exalted Christ continually reveals Himself through the Holy Spirit in the Church, so the pre-existent Christ was in times past the real speaker in the prophetic inspiration of the Old Testament seers and poets. This passage is the more important because it reveals to us one of the leading motives of the conception of pre-existence: it served to put the pre-Christian

revelation on the same basis with the Christian, and to refer it to the same source, and so to claim the Old Testament as it were by right as an authoritative revelation for the Church of Christ, and at the same time to legitimise the practice of interpreting it from a Christian point of view—in short, to christianise the Old Testament. On this pre-supposition Clement, and the Church in general, could make the freest use of the sacred scriptures of the Jews without needing to fear that they were in any way diminishing the independent dignity of Christianity by subjecting it to an external authority, for the Old Testament was thus no external authority, but the word of the pre-existent Christ speaking in the prophets. But if Christ was thus exalted as the author of revelation from the first, it is not to be wondered at if Clement actually calls Him “God,” as seems to be the case in ii. 1, where the words “His sufferings were before your eyes,” as well as the preceding “His words,” refer back to God. No doubt the word “God” occurs so much further back that the possibility must be admitted that Clement had forgotten it, and in speaking of “His sufferings” had lost sight of this reference. But, on the other hand, at least the possibility of the other way of taking the words cannot be denied, the less so as this very combination, the “sufferings and blood of God,” frequently occurs in the Fathers of the second century. If so, we should have here a suggestion of that way of looking at things which later on became known as Modalism or Patripassianism, according to which Christ was a form under which God Himself appeared, as it were, a permanent theophany. This, however, does not prevent Clement from speaking

elsewhere of Christ as the envoy of God, depending on God in the same way as the Apostles on Him (xlii. 1 f.) and as an instrument for the glorifying of God (lxiv.). In this connection we may recall that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, too, Christ is once spoken of as God, and another time as an Apostle (Heb. i. 8, iii. 1). Another point in which Clement resembles the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is his fondness for describing Christ as our High Priest; he also several times speaks of Him as our Patron (*προστάτης*) and the Helper of our weakness. He connects, however, the high-priestly office of Christ not so much with His offering of Himself upon the cross as with our offering of prayer, which Christ—that is clearly the meaning—by His intercession makes a thank-offering well-pleasing to God (xxxvi. 1, lxiv.). But it is to be noted that the latter thought occurs also in Hebrews (xiii. 15), and that the former thought, the more common in Hebrews, is also suggested by Clement when he says in vii. 4, “Let us look upon the blood of Christ and recognise how precious it is to God His Father, for being shed for the sake of our salvation, it has offered to the whole world the grace of repentance.” The Pauline doctrine of the atoning significance of the death of Christ is presupposed here, as in Hebrews, Peter, and elsewhere; but, as in the whole deutero-Pauline literature, we find in Clement the subjective influence of the death of Christ upon the heart and conscience of the believer more closely united with its objective value as an atonement than it is in Paul. Now, in what sense this subjective or ethical turn which deutero-Paulinism consistently gave to the Pauline doctrine of reconciliation, by going direct to the ethical



kernel of the matter, to the salutary impression of the death of Christ, upon the human heart—in what sense this was a degradation of Christian doctrine it is difficult to see.

For the Gentile Christian it was as natural as it was justifiable that the Christian salvation should chiefly appeal to him as bringing to the heathen, in their alienation from God, the knowledge of the true God, and the means of an ethical education which would make them a holy people of God. This simple and beautiful thought is the governing idea in the Epistle of Clement. “Through Christ”—so he boasts in xxxvi. 2—“the eyes of our heart have been opened, through Him our foolish and darkened minds have risen to meet His wondrous light, through Him would God have us to taste immortal knowledge” (*i.e.* knowledge leading to immortality); and in lix. 2 f., “Through Christ, He has called us out of darkness into light, out of ignorance to the knowledge of the glory of His name, to hope on Thy name which lays the foundation for the whole world, and has opened the eyes of our heart to know Thee as the alone Highest in the highest, the Holy One who abidest in the holies, who humblest the arrogance of the proud, and bringest the counsels of the heathen to nought, who makest rich and makest poor, who slayest and makest alive, who alone art the benefactor of spirits and God of all flesh, who lookest into the depths, and overseest the works of men, who succourest those that are in distress, and savest those that are in despair, the creator and overseer of every spirit, who distributest the nations upon earth, and hast chosen from among them all those that love Thee through Jesus Christ, Thy

beloved Son, through whom Thou hast educated us, sanctified us, brought us to honour. Let all the nations know that Thou art the sole God, and Jesus Christ is Thy Son, and we are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture." This hymn of praise is a classical expression of the Gentile-Christian consciousness, of its profound satisfaction in faith in the one God and His all-governing providence, and in the confidence that even those who were formerly heathen, but through Christ have become lovers of God, may feel themselves to be true members of the elect People of God and objects of His educative, sanctifying, and glorifying grace, partakers of the blessings of salvation even in the present, and of the glorious promises for the life of the world to come (xxxv. 1 ff.).

Clement is also deeply penetrated with the evangelical conviction that all these blessings and hopes have come to us, as to the Old Testament saints, only through the will of God, who has called us in Christ. He confesses with Paul, "We are justified not through ourselves, nor through our wisdom, or understanding, or piety, or works which we have done in holiness of heart, but through the faith by which Almighty God has justified us all from the beginning" (xxxii. 4). He feels himself bound to offer humble thanksgiving to God, who has prepared for us, weak creatures of dust, all His benefits before ever we were born (xxxviii. 3 f.). In so far, therefore, as concerns the religious kernel of the Pauline doctrines of grace and justification, Clement is in complete accord with Paul. But it is true that they take on a different aspect in his view from the fact that justification does not rest for Clement on

the atoning death of Christ, but upon election by the will of God, which has destined and called us to be His peculiar People (xxix. 1, lxiv.); that is, not only to partake the blessings of salvation which He gives, but also to resemble His holy nature in working that which is good (xxxiii., xxxiv.). To this Divine will answers the faith of man, for Clement as for Paul (xxxii. 4), but not exactly faith in the narrower sense of receiving as opposed to doing, but in the wider sense of a heart and mind finally and loyally fixed on God, which includes, along with obedience to His will, the endeavour to please Him and become like Him (xxxv. 4 f.; xxxiii. 7). Thus faith naturally no longer forms an antithesis to works, but is itself the incentive to work the works of righteousness (xxxiii. 8). Thus it can be said of Abraham that he was blessed because he had done righteousness and truth through faith (xxxii. 2), and Christians can be called upon to prove themselves righteous by works, not words, that they may receive the testimony of well-doing from God, not from themselves (xxx. 3, 7). In all that, we have to see, not a repudiation of the Pauline doctrine of justification, but a transformation of it such as we have already met with in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and such as, in fact, came about wherever the Jewish presuppositions of the Pauline theology and polemic no longer held their ground.

Clement's interest was no longer mainly directed, like Paul's, to the question how man comes into a state of grace, whether through the works of the law or through faith in Christ. This question was already solved in practice by the existence of the Gentile-Christian Church, which felt itself to be the People

of God, consisting of the elect among all nations, and the undisputed heir of the promises of God. On the other hand, much more importance now attached to the practical question how the individual members of this Church could abide steadfastly in the grace of God and become in the future partakers of His promises. And the answer to that question runs thus: "If our mind is faithfully fixed on God, if we strive after that which is well-pleasing and acceptable to Him, if we do that which is in accordance with His perfect will, and follow the way of truth, casting away from us all unrighteousness and immorality" (xxxv. 5), for "whoever humbly and ungrudgingly fulfils the ordinances and commandments of God shall be ordained and elected to the number of those who are being saved through Jesus Christ" (lviii. 2). Clement does not mean by this that such a man by his works earns salvation for himself, which would be in contradiction with xxxii. 4, but only that by his faithful obedience he would win the assurance that he would abide in the grace of God to the end, and would one day be made partaker of the great promises (xxxiv., xxxv.). But this is undoubtedly a sound evangelical thought and by no means foreign to Paul (*cf.* i. 360 f.). At the same time it is not to be overlooked that the close connection which, according to Paul, subsists between the mystical fellowship of the believer with the Christ who inspires him and the ethical life and effort of sanctification, is not found in the same form in the Epistle of Clement. It is not thought of so immediately as in Rom. vi. as the effect of the resurrection of Christ and our spiritual partaking therein; the resurrection of Christ is only an ethical motive in the sense that it is the

basis of our trust in the promise of eternal life (xlii. 3). But this same trust is nevertheless described as a "confidence of the Holy Spirit," that is to say, as an inspiring force, a divinely inwrought principle of higher ethical life and work. For this reason even those who distinguish themselves by ascetic piety are not to boast of it, but to be mindful that it is God who gives them this faith, as we all, without exception, owe to Him, and have to seek from Him, even ethical gifts and capacities (xxxviii. 2, 4). Just as we have to beseech and to hope for, from His mercy, forgiveness for our sins and weaknesses, so it is only from God that we can expect enablement to all ethical good. To Him those who are at variance must pray for the restoration of brotherly love (xlvi. 1); none is able to be found in love save him to whom God vouchsafes it (l. 2). It is because love is inwrought by God in us that it unites us with God, covers a multitude of sins, and brings all the elect to that ethical perfection in which they are truly well-pleasing to God (xlix. 5). What right have we to refuse to this "deutero-Paulinism" the character of essentially sound evangelical piety and ethics?<sup>1</sup>

For the date of Clement's letter its obvious dependence on the Epistle to the Hebrews is the decisive point. Since the latter was written at the earliest under Domitian, and perhaps not till the time of Trajan, the date of Clement is to be put

<sup>1</sup> To the generally prevailing vice of judging the Apostolic Fathers by subjective dogmatic standards of very modern origin and declaring them heretics, a very praiseworthy exception is formed by the objective presentation and sympathetic estimate of the theology of Clement which Bang has given in the *Theol. Stud. und Krit. f. 1898*, pp. 451 ff.

between 100 and 120 A.D. It cannot be put later, for the letter bears no trace either of the Gnostic controversies or of the effort to establish a hierarchy. The constitution of the Church still shows its primitive simplicity; only two offices are distinguished, those of bishops and deacons (*cf.* Phil. i. 1), the former being still identical with the presbyters. And these officials are appointed simply by respected members of the Church with the consent of the general body of church members (xliv.). But Clement's idea (xlii. 4) that the Apostles, on their missionary journeys, themselves everywhere appointed the first bishops and deacons (which is certainly not the fact), already shows the beginning of the tendency to make the bishop's office, as the direct continuation of the apostolate, the depositary of tradition and to surround it with a nimbus of higher authority. This, too, points rather to the first decades of the second century than to the first century. The circumstances of the Church are much the same as those which are presupposed by the author of Acts. There are no data which would enable us to fix the time more accurately.

The writing which has come down to us, attached to the preceding work, under the title of the Second Epistle of Clement, is not, properly speaking, a letter but a homily. This is evident not only from the absence of the introduction and conclusion appropriate to a letter, but especially from two passages (xvii. 3 and xix. 1) where a present audience is addressed. Whether this homily was really delivered, and by whom, we cannot tell. It can hardly be by the Roman Clement to whom the Epistle to the Corin-

thians known under that name is ascribed; its date and its tendency are against that, for the deutero-Pauline colouring which prevails in the letter has quite disappeared in the homily. Nevertheless there is also a certain unmistakable affinity between the two writings which explains their association in Church tradition, for the ethical Catholicism of the homily is prefigured in the letter, to some extent in quite similar phraseology. It may therefore be said that the two Clementine writings represent two distinct stages in the course of the development of Hellenistic Gentile Christianity into Catholicism.

The author of the homily begins by recalling to the mind of the church members the greatness of the benefit which God has conferred upon them in Christ. Formerly they had been blind heathen, worshippers of dead gods, and their life was nothing but a condition of death; now they have received sight, and there has dawned on them the light of the knowledge of God, who as their Father has named them sons, and has called them, who were lost, out of nothingness to salvation. More numerous children have been given to the Church, and the Gentiles who aforetime were forsaken of God have become a greater People of God, than the Jews, who think that God belongs to them. Let our gratitude for having been made to know the Father of Truth be shown by confessing the Mediator of our salvation; but to confess Him is to do what He bids us, not disobeying His commandments, and not honouring Him with the lips only but with our whole heart and mind. Merely to call Him Lord profits us nothing. We must confess Him by our works,

by love to one another, by shunning adultery, blasphemy, jealousy, by showing self-control, mercy, kindness. We ought to be compassionate to one another and not be avaricious, and we ought not to fear men but God. Since, therefore, we ought to do the will of Him who has called us we should not hesitate to bid farewell to the world; ours is but a temporary pilgrimage in this carnal world; wonderfully great is the promise of Christ, the rest to be enjoyed in the future kingdom and eternal life. In order to obtain it we have nothing to do except to walk in holiness and righteousness, and to hold the world as something foreign to us, after which we ought not to lust. For this world and the world to come are enemies, and make contrary demands on us; it is impossible for us to be friends of both. We must free ourselves from the one in order to win the other. We hold it better to hate this corruptible world and love the incorruptible blessings above. Only if we do the will of Christ shall we find rest; if not, nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment. Even the Old Testament saints were not able to deliver their children from the judgments of God; how can we hope to enter the Kingdom of God unless we keep our baptism pure and undefiled? Or who shall be our advocate, unless we be found in possession of holy and righteous works? Let us fight the fight of incorruption (immortality), and let us hold to the straight path, that we may be crowned—or, if we cannot all be crowned, at least come near the crown. Now, while we are still in this world, is the time to repent of our evil deeds from our whole heart, that we may obtain salvation. After our departure from this world there will be no further



opportunity of confession and repentance. Therefore everything depends on keeping the flesh pure and our seal (baptism) without spot, that we may obtain eternal life. Let no one say that this flesh is not judged and is not raised up. For if Christ, who before was Spirit, became flesh, and if we have been called in the flesh and in the flesh shall receive our reward, we must keep the flesh as a temple of God. Now, while the time of healing is still present, let us deliver ourselves up to God, who cures our sickness, and repent with a pure heart, that He may receive us as sons. If we are zealous in doing good, peace shall be our portion; if we serve God with a pure heart, we shall be righteous; if we do not serve Him because we do not believe His promise, we shall be miserable. Miserable are the doubters who say, "These things we have heard even in the time of our fathers, but we have waited for them day after day and have seen none of them [happen]." Ye fools, you can see by the example of the tree and the vine how everything needs time for gradual ripening. Therefore we ought not to doubt, but to be steadfast in hope and do that which is right before God, who is faithful to fulfil His promises. Let us take care that His name be not blasphemed among the heathen, if they should find our works not in harmony with our words! If we do the will of God our Father, we shall be members of the spiritual Church which was from the beginning, created before sun and moon, which, as the body of Christ, is related to Christ as the flesh to the spirit, as the woman to the man. But now that the spiritual Church has been manifested in the flesh of Christ, and thus the flesh in general has become a form of manifestation (*ἀντίτυπος*)

of the Spirit, we must keep the flesh holy, for to defile it would be a sin against Christ and the Church. The flesh, being united with the Holy Spirit, shall become partaker of the incorruptible life which the Lord has appointed for His elect. We have the more reason to repent and to overcome the lusts of our soul since we know that the day of judgment is already drawing nigh which shall burn as a fiery furnace, wherein certain of the heavens and the whole earth shall melt like lead in the fire. Salutary, therefore, is beneficence,<sup>1</sup> even as repentance from sin; fasting is more effectual than prayer, but beneficence than both. Love covers a multitude of sins, but prayer out of a good conscience delivers from death. Blessed is everyone who is found rich in these things! But we are not only, each for himself, to repent with all our hearts, we must also help each other and guide the weak to that which is good, that we may all be saved, and we must correct and admonish one another. And not only now let us believe and give heed to the exhortations of our presbyters, but also when we have returned home let us remember the commandments of the Lord and not suffer ourselves to be dragged away by worldly lusts, but endeavour to advance in the commandments of the Lord, that we may all, setting our minds in the same direction, be gathered together into life. For when the Lord says (Isa. lxvi. 18), "I come to gather all nations," He speaks of the day of His appearing, when He shall come and bring us deliverance, each according to his works: the day of judgment when the unbelieving

<sup>1</sup> Or "alms-giving." The Greek is *ἐλεημοσύνη*, but in rendering *Wohltätigkeit*, *Wohltun*, the author perhaps intends to leave room for a wider interpretation.—TRANSLATOR.

shall see with astonishment all power over the world in the hands of Jesus; when men shall see who among us have lived impiously and dealt falsely with the commandments of Jesus. But the righteous, who have done that which is good and suffered tortures and hated the luxurious pleasures of the soul, when they see the fearful torments of those who in word or deed have denied Jesus, will praise God and say: there shall be hope for him who has served God with his whole heart. May we also belong to these! May we gladly accept instruction and admonition! May we work righteousness that we may attain the goal of blessedness! Blessed are they who obey these commandments! Even if they have suffered for a short time here below, they shall reap, in compensation for that, the immortal fruit of the resurrection. A time of blessedness awaits the righteous when he shall live again above with the Fathers, and rejoice in an eternity where there is no sorrow. Let us not be led into confusion when we see the unrighteous grow rich and the servants of God in affliction! Let us only believe, and endure the trials of the present life that we may obtain the crown of the life to come. None among the righteous has received his fruit quickly; he must wait for it. Did God give the reward of the righteous speedily, our service of God would become a matter of business, and our righteousness would be mere seeming, for our seeking would not be after righteousness but after gain; and in this way the Divine Judgment (the impatient and selfish expectation of it) may become to an unjust spirit an evil and a heavy chain.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If the aorists *ἐβλαψε* and *ἐβάρυνε* are taken in this way, as referring to a frequently occurring case—to which there can be no

To the one invisible God, the Father of truth, who has sent unto us the Saviour and Prince of incorruption, through whom also He has revealed unto us the truth and the heavenly life, be glory to all eternity. Amen.

I have given the whole homily in an abridged form because it seems to contain a particularly clear picture of the Catholic Christianity of the middle of the second century. This Christianity is certainly not Pauline; the doctrines of the atoning death of Christ and imputed righteousness have completely disappeared, leaving no trace behind; but it cannot be called unevangelical; it is incomparably nearer to the teaching of the Gospels than the Pauline theology is. But neither is it the Christianity of the primitive Palestinian Church, which was still so closely attached to Judaism. This attachment has here been wholly given up; the questions of the national prerogative of Israel, of the validity of its law and its forms of worship, are entirely obsolete, and the place of the earthly Messianic kingdom, with its more or less Jewish colouring, has been taken by the Hellenistic hope of the heavenly life. God is no longer the special God of the Jews, whom they imagine they have as a kind of natural possession (ii. 3), but the "Father of Truth" who has called to life, out of the deadness of heathenism, a new and greater people for Himself. It is for that very purpose that He has sent Christ out of the spiritual realm into earthly flesh, in order through Him to reveal to all men "the

objection on linguistic grounds—the difficult words in xx. 4 (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θεία κρίσις ἐβλαψε πνεῦμα μὴ ὄν δίκαιον, καὶ ἐβάρυνε δεσμός) acquire a satisfactory sense.

truth," namely, the true knowledge of God and the hope of the heavenly, eternal life, and so to call the heathen, who were without hope, to salvation (xx. 5, i. 4-iii. 1). As the seal of this calling, believers have received the sign of baptism. But at the same time, God, who calls us, has made known His will through Christ, and on the diligent performance of that will depends the actual obtaining of salvation in the eternal life. As the author of Second Peter urges his readers to make their calling and election sure by diligently practising the Christian virtues (2 Pet. i. 4-11), so Clement in the same spirit exhorts Christians to keep the seal of their calling which they have received in baptism, or to maintain its efficacy, by virtuous Christian conduct, by a confession of Christ which is not in word but in deed—practical righteousness is the condition of receiving salvation. But this righteousness has nothing to do with the Jewish works of the law; it consists of the universal human virtues of love to one's neighbour, victory over self, mastery of the sensuous nature, patience in suffering, thinking lightly of earthly goods and ills, and seeking after heavenly blessings with Christian hope; while to love, shown in beneficence, a special power of cancelling sin is ascribed (xvi. 4). Yet it is not the mere outward practice of these works which is thought of as having value in itself; Clement emphatically demands "Repentance [change of attitude] from the whole heart." Only that man has the right to hope "who serves God with the whole heart" (xvii. 7), who confesses Him "not only with the lips, but with the whole heart and mind" (iii. 4), who gives thanks to his Creator by speaking and hearing "with faith and love," and continues

righteous and holy in his faith (xv. 2 f.). What is demanded, therefore, is not a mere legal performance of works, but a genuinely virtuous frame of mind, and this in turn rests, according to our author, on religious conviction, on the knowledge of the Father of Truth and belief in His will to call us to salvation, and His promise of eternal life—a knowledge and assurance which is mediated by the revelation of God in Christ whom He has sent (i. 4, iii. 1, xi. 1–6, xx. 5). This fact, that religious conviction about God and eternity, and the ethical attitude of mind which springs therefrom, have their historical basis in the revelation of God in Christ, forms the decisive point of distinction between this Christian Hellenism and the pre-Christian, with which it shares, in general, its fundamental religious and ethical ideas.

In the dogmatic teaching of 2 Clement the only features which call for special notice are the doctrines of Christ and the Church. At the very beginning our homily lays down the Christian principle that we must think of Jesus Christ as a<sup>1</sup> God (*φρονεῖν περὶ* I. X., *ὡς περὶ θεοῦ*), as the judge of living and dead, for a low view of Him would involve a low view of the Christian salvation. Belief in the deity of Christ for our author, who in this represents what had already become the prevailing view in the Church, is an expression of the absolute value of the Christian religion as exalted above Judaism and the ethnic religions. His view of the deity of Christ has not, however, the definite character of the later Trinitarian doctrine. The relation of Christ to the Father, and also to the Spirit, is quite undefined and fluctuating. The author introduces Old Testament

<sup>1</sup> The German is “für einen Gott halten.”

passages as sayings of Jesus (iii. 5), and a saying of Jesus as a word of God (xiii. 4); the calling and redemption of Christians has sometimes Christ for its author and sometimes God. This naïve religious Monarchianism was undoubtedly widely current in the second century (*cf.* the Ignatian and Johannine Epistles), but must not be treated as equivalent to the definite dogmatic Monarchianism of the heretics of the third century (Patripassianism). Still less defined than the relation to God is that to the Holy Spirit. In ix. 5 we find "Christ the Lord, who has redeemed us, who was first Spirit, became flesh and thus [in His incarnate state] called us"; and in xiv. 4 "the Spirit is Christ." According to Clement as well as Hermas (p. 291 *sup.*) the pre-existing Christ is therefore identical with the Holy Spirit. The latter is not a separate hypostasis alongside of the Son, but the Son is the Spirit *sensu eminenti*, including all other spirits within Himself and standing at the head of the highest spiritual existences (*cf.* Apoc. i. 4, and the relation of the Son-Spirit to the angel-spirits in Hermas). But besides this resemblance between the Christologies of Clement and Hermas, we have also to notice a difference. According to the latter, the pre-existent Christ-Spirit united itself to the man Jesus in such a way that the latter worked together with Him as an obedient servant; according to Clement, on the other hand, the Christ-Spirit (like the Logos in John i. 14) became flesh in Jesus, who was therefore only the human form of manifestation of the Divine Spirit-Being — not distinguished from the latter as an independent human personality who could work with Him. The Christology of Clement was therefore (according to later theological termino-

logy) Monophysite, while that of Hermas was Adoptionist and Dyothelete. The distinction corresponds generally to that which obtained later between the Egypto-Oriental and the Roman Catholic Christology. It is also to be noticed that Clement shows the same absence of acquaintance with the Johannine Logos-doctrine as Hermas does. Where this established itself, it led to a defining of the relation of the Son to the Father and the Spirit. The fact that this relation still remained so undefined up to and after the middle of the second century in orthodox teachers like Hermas and Clement is one more indication of the worthlessness of the Church's Johannine tradition.

The doctrine of Christ in 2 Clement is most closely connected with that of the Church. According to xiv. 1, those who do the will of God belong to the first, the spiritual Church, the Church of Life, which was created before the sun and moon, which is related to Christ as the body to the spirit, or the wife to the husband, of which the holy Scriptures and the Apostles have said aforetime that it is now not beginning, but comes from above (has descended out of a pre-existent state, like Christ). To its pre-mundane origin Clement applies the words from the creation story, "God created them male and female" (Gen. i. 27), adding the interpretation, "the male is Christ, the female is the Church" (xiv. 2). The interpretation of the creation of man in Gen. i. as referring to the ideal prototypal man goes back to Philo, but by him the prototypal man is thought of as hermaphrodite or sexless; the interpretation of it as referring to a pair (syzygy) of spiritual beings, or, more precisely, to prototypal man and the Church,



is, on the other hand, of Gnostic origin. In particular, in the system of the Valentinians, which was first formulated in Egypt, the syzygy of *Anthropos* and *Ecclesia* forms one of the chief pairs of æons (vol. iii. p. 151). It was doubtless from this source that our author took his theory of Christ and the Church as pre-existing in association. In doing so he may quite well have been convinced that he was in harmony with Scripture and Church teaching, for by the allegorical method of interpretation he was able to find in the Mosaic writings (*τὰ βιβλία*) the creation of that pre-existent pair; and, as regards the other authority—the Apostles—Paul had certainly spoken of Jerusalem above, “which is the mother of us all” (Gal. iv. 26), and the Epistle to the Hebrews had spoken of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven (xii. 22 f.). Further, Paul had described the Church not only as the body, but as the bride of Christ (2 Cor. xi. 2), and his pupil had, in the Epistle to the Ephesians (v. 25–32) found the ideal of earthly marriage in the relation of Christ to the Church, that “great mystery”; while the Apocalyptist, and after him many Gnostic hymns, celebrated the union of Christ with the community of the faithful as the heavenly marriage feast (*cf.* Apoc. xix. 7 ff., xxi. 2, and the hymns in the Acts of Thomas). This pious hope of the Church of a future blessed espousal with Christ the heavenly bridegroom had been metaphysically hypostatised in the Gnostic speculations into a connection, existing from all eternity, between the divine æons, prototypal Man and the Church, and for this again the gnosticising Epistle to the Ephesians gave a suggestion in its doctrine of the

election of Christians in Christ before the world was (i. 4). From this ideal pre-existence of the elect in their head and mediator, Christ, it was, for the thought of the period, but a short step to the real transcendental pre-existence of the spiritual Church as the Spouse of Christ. It is therefore scarcely to be wondered at if the Church homilist here unsuspectingly follows the footsteps of Gnostic speculation. But from these common premises he proceeded to draw practical conclusions which were directly opposed to the Gnostic dualism, especially in its libertine form (Carpocratians). Like the Christ-Spirit, so also the Church-Spirit, His heavenly spouse, had revealed itself in the flesh, *i.e.* in the flesh of Jesus and His followers (xiv. 3). The earthly Church of the faithful is, in the view of our author, the continuation of the becoming-flesh of the heavenly Christ-Spirit in Jesus, as it were the expansion to a macrocosm of the God-Man who only existed as a monad in Jesus—once more a Gnostic conception, of which the germ is already present in Eph. iv. 4-16. From this our author draws the conclusion that the flesh of Christians, since it is also the flesh of Christ, and therefore the form in which the Divine Spirit is manifested, is something holy, which must be kept pure from all sensual pollution. "For this flesh is the antitype of the Spirit; none, therefore, who corrupts the antitype shall receive the prototype. Therefore he (Christ?) says, 'Keep the flesh (pure) that ye may be partakers of the Spirit'" (xiv. 3). Whether this is intended to be a quotation of a saying of Christ is not clear; whence it comes is unknown. Strict ascetic self-discipline is, according to our

homilist, a prime duty of the Christian, and he gives it both a christological basis (from the incarnation of Christ follows the hallowing of the flesh in the Church) and an eschatological, partly by means of the usual motive of the retributive judgment, partly by the peculiar thought that the Kingdom of God will come when there are no longer male and female, *i.e.* when male and female mutually regard and treat each other as brother and sister. As the authority for this, he expressly cites a saying of the Lord (xii. 2), which, however, is not found in any of the Gospels which have come down to us. According to Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, III. xiii.) it is from the Gospel of the Egyptians, to which perhaps the other apocryphal quotations in our homily also belong (iv. 5, v. 3, viii. 5).

That we do not know either the date or place of origin of so interesting a treatise is to be regretted. Almost all critics are agreed that the author is not the same as that of 1 Clement; on other points there is much difference of opinion. The majority believe that this homily originated either in Rome or in Corinth. Many, in consequence of the partial resemblance to the "Shepherd" of Hermas, have sought to connect it with the Clement mentioned by him (*Vis.* ii. 4; *cf.* p. 267 f.). Harnack (*Chronologie*, pp. 440 ff.) proposes to identify it with the Epistle which the Roman Church in the time of the bishop Soter (165–175) wrote to the Corinthians, and which, according to Dionysius of Corinth (Euseb., *H.E.*, IV. xxiii. 11) was there used in the services of the Church as an edifying treatise. I will not contest the possibility of this hypothesis, but I admit that I do not consider it probable, for neither can I see that this homily is

a letter at all, nor can I find therein any trace of the Roman spirit which has left its mark so plainly in 1 Clement and the "Shepherd" of Hermas. To me it seems that both the theological and the ascetic character of this homily, as well as the close resemblance to the *Didache* and 2 Peter (with xi. 2 and xvi. 3 *cf.* 2 Peter iii. 4 ff. and 12), and especially its use of an apocryphal Gospel which must have been either the Gospel of the Egyptians or the Gospel of Peter, point to Egypt as its place of origin, and the third quarter of the second century as its date. By what accident this Egyptian homily came to take its place beside the First Epistle of Clement and received its traditional title, the "Second Epistle of Clement," it is as impossible to tell as in the majority of similar cases.

## THE CLEMENTINE WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXI

#### THE HOMILIES AND RECOGNITIONS

UNDER these titles<sup>1</sup> there has come down, in a twofold recension, a "tendency romance" allied to the apocryphal Acts, especially the Acts of Peter, but distinguished from them by its polemic against Paulinism, Gnosticism, and heathenism, which is clothed in the form of a disputation between Peter and Simon Magus. Since both these documents, in the form in which we have them, date without doubt from the third century (of the Recognitions the assertion can be made with complete confidence), they would not seem strictly to claim a place in an account of early Christian literature. But, by way of appendix, it is certainly allowable to mention them here because they are undoubtedly based on one or

<sup>1</sup> The "Homilies" are also shortly called *Κλημεντία*, the "Recognitions" (*ἀναγνωρισμοὶ* or *ἀναγνώσεις*) are also called *Περίοδοι* or *Πράξεις Πέτρου*, *Itinerarium Petri*, also *Gesta* or *Historia Clementis*, and, lastly, *Disputatio Petri cum Simone Mago*. Probably these different titles point to various sources underlying the romance. Of the Homilies there is a good critical edition by de Lagarde. The Recognitions are only preserved in the Latin translation of Rufinus; I use the edition of Gersdorf in the *Bibl. der lat. Kirchenväter* (Leipzig, 1838).

more sources derived from the second century, and in several respects they are important for the history of primitive Christianity. It is true that the relation of the Homilies and Recognitions to each other and to the sources which must be assumed to underlie them, is even to-day a very debatable question, which can scarcely be solved with complete certainty. Uhlhorn, who by his monograph on these writings (1854) did excellent service in contributing to the understanding of them, lately<sup>1</sup> summed up the present position of criticism to the following effect. It is impossible to hold simply either that the Homilies or the Recognitions are the earlier; both have underlying them an earlier document, "the *Kerugmata*<sup>2</sup> (Preachings) of Peter," the dogmatic content of which is more faithfully preserved in the Homilies, while the narrative part is more faithfully preserved in the Recognitions; but whether the *Kerugmata* is the primary source of the whole set of writings, or is itself a recension of a still older document (according to Lipsius, the *Acta Petri*), and if so, what was the character of this document and whether it had itself an anti-Pauline tendency—all that is problematical and will remain so until we have correct editions and commentaries for the two writings. This being the position of matters, it seems to me advisable to pass over the problems of literary history, and not to follow in detail the plot of the

<sup>1</sup> In his essay in the 1898 Herzog's *Realencyclopädie*, where a conspectus of the earlier views (Schliemann, Hilgenfeld, Lehmann, Lipsius) is also given.

<sup>2</sup> These *Kerugmata* mentioned in the Homilies are not identical with the better known *Kerugma* (Πέτρον), on which see below, p. 398 f.—TRANSLATOR.

story (Clement starts out from Rome to seek truth, meets with Peter in Cæsarea, becomes a Christian, and, accompanying Peter in his further journeyings, finds his long-lost mother and brethren, and finally his father, who, when they have been released from the snare of Simon the sorcerer, likewise become Christians), but to confine myself to the kernel of the whole, the antignostic polemic, which is most prominent in the Homilies.

The representative of all the false teachers whom Peter has to oppose is Simon the Magian. Before he is introduced in person disputing with Peter, his former history is narrated (Hom. ii. 22, and, rather differently, Rec. ii. 7 ff.). He was a Samaritan from the village of Gitta near the town (of Samaria); his parents' names were Antonius and Rahel. In Alexandria he received instruction in Greek philosophy and magic. By means of this he defeated Dositheus, who after the death of John the Baptist had become the head of his School. Simon then took the lead among the thirty disciples of John, and travelled about with Helena, who also belonged to this school, by his magic arts seduced the multitude to ungodliness, killed a boy in order to use his soul as a helper in his sorcery, afterwards giving out that he had himself formed the body of the boy out of air and again dissipated it into air. The teaching of Simon is described in the Homilies as follows<sup>1</sup>: The creator of the universe is not the supreme God. The latter is a mysterious being who is unknown to all, even to the Demiurge. This supreme God has sent

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ii. 22, 25; iii. 2; xviii. 11 f., where this is described as his own special view in contradistinction to what he says merely as the representative of other false teachers.

forth two gods, one of whom was the creator of the world, the other the law-giver. Simon gave himself out to be the supreme Power of the Deity, sometimes also as Christ, and named himself "the standing one" because he would always exist; Helena he described as the deess who had come down from the highest heaven into this world, the Mother of All, Wisdom, the prototype of the Helen about whom the Greeks and Trojans fought. Further, he repudiated Jerusalem and put Mount Gerizim in its place. He allegorised the words of the Law in an arbitrary fashion to suit himself. He denied the resurrection, and while he admitted a judgment, he took (in practice) no account of it. According to the Recognitions, too (i. 72, ii. 7, 11), Simon called himself "the standing one," and would have himself regarded as the Christ and as the Power of God exalted above the creator of the world, and worshipped with Divine honours, and he proclaimed his Luna (Helena = Selene = Luna) to be Wisdom come down from the higher heavens, and the Mother of All Things. Further, he said (ii. 38 ff.) that below the highest God or God of gods, who was unknown to all, there were many subordinate gods, one of whom had been chosen by lot to be the god of the Jews, and indeed each nation had its ruling Angel-Prince who was held by that nation to be a god. The highest God had sent one of the subordinate gods to create the world, and then this subordinate god had given himself out to be (the highest) God, and had required the observance of the Law, whereas the supreme, good God only required man to know Him. This knowledge, however, was difficult for man while he was in the flesh, because the soul, though it was



indeed derived from the supreme, good God, had descended into the bondage of this world, and had become clothed with a body which was blacker than all darkness and heavier than all earthly matter (ii. 57 f.).

These two accounts, the second of which serves to supplement the first, are essentially in agreement with what we have learnt to know above (iii. 133 f.) as the Gnosticism of the Simonians, according to Irenæus and the *Philosophumena*. It is therefore not correct to take the Simon of the Clementines as a fictitious representative of Gnosticism in general and even to deny his historical existence. He was undoubtedly a historical person who was closely connected with the Jewish sect of the Simonians, though it is an open question whether he was the founder of this sect, which may be regarded as a degenerate form of the Ophite popular Gnosticism of Syria, or whether the sect only named itself after him because it had made the famous sorcerer and libertine (an ancient Cagliostro or Faust) its deified hero as a Gnostic rival to Christ. In either case it is easy to understand how the extreme Jewish Christians, in their wrath against the Apostle Paul as the "hostile man" who destroyed the Law, compared him to the hero of the Antinomian Gnostics, the deified charlatan Simon, and that out of this comparison there gradually grew a kind of half identification of the two, such as meets us in the Clementine "tendency-romance." I say "half identification," for even though Simon here to a large extent plays the rôle of Paul, and Paul is travestied and combated in the character of Simon, yet the original separateness of the "hostile man" (Paul) and the Magian

Simon is still clearly recognisable. In the Epistle of Peter to James, which may be regarded as the preface to the *Preachings of Peter*, the source of the *Homilies*, we find mention only of the "lawless and foolish teaching of the hostile man" which misinterprets the teaching of Peter as abolishing the Law, without any reference to the Gnostic system of Simon the Magian. Again, Simon first appears in the story at the disputation at Cæsarea (*Rec. i. 72, 74*) without any connection with what is told immediately before (*70 f.*) about the "hostile man," who in Jerusalem had stirred up the Jewish people, when they were even disposed to be converted, against Christianity; who had thrown James, the bishop, down from the steps of the Temple, and who then set out for Damascus with a commission from the high priest to persecute the Christians there, and especially Peter. Here the account of the "hostile man" breaks off; it is possible that in the source there followed here a parody of the conversion of Paul by the vision of Christ on the way to Damascus.

To this event refers the dispute between Simon and Peter regarding the possibility of a revelation by visions (*Hom. xvii. 13-19*). Simon maintains that revelation by vision is not merely possible, but carries with it a greater certainty than that by human teaching (*cf. Gal. i. 1, 12, 16*). To this Peter answers that in visions there is no guarantee that a man is not being made the victim of a deceiving spirit. He knows, too, by personal experience that the true revelation of God, because of which he was declared blessed by Jesus (*Matt. xvi. 17*), was given without visions and dreams, and so, too, God spoke with Moses, His friend, not by visions and dreams,

but face to face. If Jesus had made Himself known to Simon in a vision He had certainly spoken to him in wrath as to an adversary. But if Simon asserted that a man could be instructed in doctrine by a vision, why had the Master companied with the disciples in their ordinary waking state for a whole year? "But how could He have appeared to you, since you hold the exact opposite of His doctrine? If you have in a single hour been made by Him, through a vision, into a disciple and apostle, then proclaim His words, expound His teachings, love His apostles, contend not with me, who have lived with Him! For you have fiercely attacked me, the firm rock and foundation of the Church. If you were not an adversary, you would not have blasphemed my teaching, and represented that which I have heard from the Lord Himself as unworthy of belief, as if I had been a condemned and rejected person. And if you call me 'condemned' (*cf.* Gal. ii. 11) you are accusing God who revealed Christ to me, and the Lord who blessed me for this revelation. But if you really desire to be a helper of the truth (1 Cor. iii. 9, 2 Cor. xiii. 8), first learn from us what we have learned from Him, and having thus become a disciple of the truth, become a fellow-worker with us." To this Simon answers, "Far be it from me to become a disciple either of Him or of you. Do I not know of myself all that it is needful to know?" (xvii. 20). It is clear that Paul is here attacked in the character of Simon Magus, and the passage also shows us how Jewish Christians arrived at this malicious travesty of the Apostle of the Gentiles. The common term which made the comparison possible was in part the antinomianism

which was opposed both to Judaism and Jewish Christianity, partly the basing of this upon a spiritual revelation which claimed to be superior to historical tradition.

In these two closely connected points there is, in fact, an inner affinity between Paulinism and the Gnosticism which had originated earlier and independently of Christianity as a Jewish-heathen form of syncretism. It is only because the latter fact has generally been overlooked that it was possible to arrive at the false opinion that the Simon who is attacked in the Clementines is nothing more than a Jewish fiction, originally standing for Paulinism and nothing else. The Simon of the Clementine Homilies is rather, in the first place, simply the representative of the Gnosticism of the Simonians, whose metaphysical speculations about the highest God and the subordinate gods are derived from heathen syncretism and have nothing whatever to do with Paulinism, and whose libertine antinomianism is as far removed from Pauline antinomianism as the liberty of the flesh is from the liberty of the Spirit (Gal. v. 1 and 13). That the Judaisers, in spite of this essential distinction, simply lumped together Paul and Simon, only shows that their bitter hatred against the apostate from legalistic Judaism had blinded their eyes to the true meaning of Paulinism and the spiritual greatness of the Apostle of the Gentiles. When, further on, the Simon of the Clementines also figures as a representative of the Marcionite Gnosticism this has a little more justification, inasmuch as Marcion's dualistic separation of the good and the righteous God does in fact betray the influence of the old ethnic syncretistic Gnosticism.

In other respects, however, this was also an unfair travesty, inasmuch as the morally earnest ascetic antinomianism of Marcion was the antithesis of the libertine antinomianism of the Simonians. For the implacable opponents of Paul, who must still in those days have formed a strong section among the Jewish Christians, it was obviously a very skilful piece of tactics to combat, under the form of the arch-heretic Simon, at one and the same time Paul and Marcion. As against the latter they could offer themselves as allies to the Catholic Church, which at that time was obliged to defend itself against the Marcionite heresy, and might therefore hope to stand a better chance of undermining at the same time the authority of Paul and so of advancing the cause of their anti-Pauline legalistic Christianity within the Church. This bold attempt, however, only half succeeded; the Church did not allow itself to be deprived of its great Apostle Paul. But it was only able to save him at the cost of transforming the Paul of the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians into the Paul of the Pastoral Epistles; the preacher of the Gospel of the Spirit and of liberty into the teacher of the "new law" of the Church.

The teaching which the Homilies contrast, as the true teaching of Peter, with the false doctrine of Simon, *i.e.* with Paulinism and Gnosticism, is not the simple Jewish Christianity of the old opponents of Paul, but a Jewish Christianity which has been strongly influenced by Hellenistic Gnosticism, and while it forms in some respects the antithesis of the Marcionite doctrine, in others forms a pendant to it. If Marcion had made a dualistic distinction between the good God and the just God, the Homilies insist

with the greatest emphasis upon the unity of God ; if Marcion had placed Christianity, as the absolutely new religion, in direct opposition to Judaism, the Homilies assert the essential unity of the religion revealed by Jesus with the genuine teaching of Moses, and of both with the primal religion revealed to Adam. On the other hand, however, the Homilies are able to carry through this identification of Christianity with the Mosaic religion only by applying to the Old Testament a criticism as rigorous as that of Marcion himself, and declaring not only the ritual portions of the Law, but also the writings of the prophets, to be a corruption of the true teaching of Moses. In general there runs through the whole of the Clementine philosophy of religion the contrast between true and false prophecy. From the former is derived the unvarying truth of the natural (Adamic), the Mosaic, and Christian religions ; for the latter the errors and distortions of the one pure truth, which from the first began to creep in, and at each successive stage, at each new and more complete revelation of the truth, constantly reappeared. This historical antithesis of true and false prophecy has its ultimate roots for the Homilies, as well as for Marcion, in a transcendental duality of principles, which extends back even into the Divine nature ; which is not indeed conceived to destroy the unity of the Divine "Monarchy," but even by this is rather outwardly held together and concealed than inwardly overcome or resolved. The Gnostic dualism therefore still underlies the anti-Gnostic doctrine of the Homilies, however earnestly the attempt may be made here to reconcile it with the Biblical monotheism of the Church. The Church could not there-

fore approve this compromise, for in it neither was justice done to the newness of Christianity and its superiority to pre-Christian religion, nor could the indispensable authority of the Old Testament as revelation be preserved in conjunction with this sharp division between true and false elements in it. In this the Homilies showed, according to the judgment of the Church, the error of Marcion, while, on the other hand, they let slip what was true in the absolute value which he attached to Christianity. For this reason the Catholic redactor of the Homilies, or their source, has so softened down the peculiarities of this Jewish-Christian Gnosis that in the Recognitions it is scarcely perceptible, and what remains is merely the polemic against Gnosticism and heathenism in a form edifying for Church readers. In giving an account of the peculiar Clementine doctrine we have therefore to keep exclusively to the Homilies. I will now deal in a little more detail with the principal points.

The first commandment which the apostle is commissioned to proclaim is: Fear God and serve Him only (xvii. 7). Monotheism is expressly placed in the forefront, and defended against heathen and Gnostic polytheism. In the description of the Divine nature there appears the effort, characteristic of Hellenism, to reconcile, so far as possible, the popular Old-Testament, anthropomorphic conception of God with the philosophic idea of the Infinite. God must, indeed, have a form; nay, a body and limbs, in order that the pure in heart may be able to see Him, and that man may be created after His image. But He is not for that reason bounded by space, for space is not-being or nothing, and therefore stands to Him

who *is*, to God, in no assignable relation. As the sun has indeed a circular shape and is wholly surrounded by the air, but yet penetrates this in every direction with its illuminating and warming power, there is nothing to prevent God, the Creator and Lord of all, from existing in Himself in form and beauty, while His effectual power extends to infinity. He can even be called "the All," because He is the "heart of the world," from which, as from a centre, all life-giving power extends upwards, downwards, and around. And as it is the point of departure, so also it is the goal or "rest of the All," to the bosom of which all souls return (xvii. 7-10). Among the attributes of God the moral attributes stand at the head. God is Lord and Father, Law-giver and Judge (ii. 45 f.). To the assertion of Simon-Marcion that God as the Law-giver is just and not good, and therefore another than the Father, whom alone Jesus called good (Mark x. 18), Peter replies: It is the same God who shows Himself good by His long-suffering in forgiving penitent sinners in the present, and who will show Himself just when at the Judgment He shall reward each man according to his deserts (xviii. 1 f.); which indeed is no very satisfactory solution of the problem, since in this way, instead of the combination of goodness and justice, there appears to be rather a juxtaposition or alternation.

In his cosmology the author seeks to reconcile the doctrine of creation with the philosophic theories of his time. To the question of Simon, whether it is not necessary to assume alongside of God, who is only the author of good, another cause for the evil of the world, Peter replies that God is the "forth-bringer" (*προβολεύς*) of the four elements, heat and



cold, humidity and dryness (xix. 12, xx. 3), and from the mixture of these in various proportions the world has arisen. Other passages seem to imply an eternal simple matter, external to God, or co-ordinated with the Divine spirit as the body of God, from which God, by means of division, caused the four elements to arise (iii. 33, xx. 8). Out of these elements God then, from the beginning, formed two realms or worlds—the present, which is poor and transient; the future, which is great and abiding; the former destined to be the dominion of the wicked; the latter, of the good (xx. 2). The good Lord of the future world is the Son, who is directly begotten “from the best side of God” (His Spirit); the wicked ruler of this world, on the other hand, did not originate directly from God, but from a mixture of the world-elements apart from God, as the World-Soul (xx. 8). Since, therefore, spirit and matter are the two equally eternal, if not equally excellent, sides of the Divine nature, there go forth from it with equal necessity the Son who is begotten from the Spirit, and the devil who is born of the division and mixture of the elements. The Son and the devil, therefore, form the first syzygy, in which the antithesis of spirit and matter, which is latent in the Deity, becomes manifest. The former is God’s right hand, the latter His left hand; the former is His instrument in vivifying and healing, the latter His punitive death-dealing power (vii. 3). It can therefore actually be said of the devil (iii. 5) that he loves God no less than the good Son does; only that forgiving mercy towards those who sin in ignorance is foreign to him, *i.e.* in other words, to the Divine world-order, considered as a whole, belongs retributive justice, just as much as saving grace.

The devil, therefore, takes, in the Homilies, very much the same place as the just God of the Law takes for Marcion. But whereas in Marcion the just and the good God stand side by side unconnected in a duality which destroys monotheism, in the Homilies the Divine "Monarchy" is preserved by connecting the devil, not with God but with the Son, in a syzygy, and thinking of both as organs of the monarchic Divine world-administration.

After the highest antithesis, Son and devil, there follows a twofold series of antitheses or pairs. First, a cosmic series, in which the superior or male principle precedes the inferior or female: heaven and earth, day and night, light and fire, sun and moon, life and death; then a historical series in which, on the contrary, the inferior precedes the superior: Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, down to John and Jesus, and finally Simon and Peter (ii. 15 ff.). Between these two, at the point after which the order changes, stands the first human pair, Adam and Eve. Adam possessed the great and holy spirit of prophecy, the spirit of Christ, and was therefore the one true prophet, and so was capable of giving to each animal the name appropriate to it. The woman created along with him as his consort was as far inferior to Adam as the moon to the sun, as fire to light. As Adam was the first true prophet, so Eve was the first false prophetess, for "the male principle is wholly truth, the female wholly error" (iii. 20-27). Men, who sprung from this first pair, are so far different from their parents that in them both elements are combined: from Adam they have the spirit of truth, from Eve that of lies; the sensuous side of man, his animate body, is derived from Eve

and is the seat of the passions; his spirit is derived from Adam and is a breath of God (xx. 2). At the same time the whole man is the image of God, for his body is a copy of the form of God, while his rational soul possesses likeness (*ὁμοιότης*) with God (x. 6, xi. 4). As, therefore, in the nature of God spirit and matter are originally combined, and are then separated in the syzygies of the first series, so in man, as the image of God, both are again combined, and from him in turn there goes forth a series of syzygies in which, however, the inferior precedes the superior. In the first line of development which proceeded from God the pneumatic (spiritual) always predominated; but in the second, which begins with human history and returns again to God, it is at first always the sensuous that predominates, and the spiritual only attains to the mastery by a struggle with it. Man stands between the two realms into which the world is divided from the beginning, in such a way that he has freedom to turn either to one or the other. By the Divine ordinance it is only as the result of his own free decision that the spirits of the good or evil kingdom acquire power over him. The origin of sin is not, however, traced to the fall of man's first parents, but partly to the declension of the first generation of men, who, because they had things too easy at first, fell into wantonness and ingratitude, but partly also to the fall of the angels, who practised unchastity with the daughters of men, and begat the giants, who afterwards led men astray into idolatry and the use of flesh meats and to magical arts. The spirits of these giants, who perished in the Flood, are the demons who take possession of men who devote themselves to their

service, cause disease and sins of all kinds in them, and especially lead them into idolatry, which is nothing else than the perversion of the original worship of God into the worship of demons.

In order to check this process of degeneration of the true religion, God caused the true prophet who had been present in Adam to reappear in Moses. He again proclaimed true religion, the primal law of God, but he did not himself write this down, only delivering it orally to seventy wise men who inscribed it in the Book of the Law, not in its original purity, but with an admixture of false doctrines and commandments. The same thing was repeated again when the Book of the Law, which had been destroyed in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, was restored. The prophets, too, who were inspired by the female, *i.e.* the untrue, spirit of prophecy (iii. 23, 53), have by these obscure utterances increased the misunderstanding of the Mosaic revelation. The Old Testament is therefore a very turbid source of Divine revelation. To the errors which it contains belong all the anthropopathic statements which are unworthy of God, such as those which represent Him as ignorant, jealous, repentant, unjust, and, in particular, the whole sacrificial system, and the story of the Fall of Adam, who was really the first manifestation of the true and perfect prophet. These falsifications of the truth were introduced by the devil into the Old Testament, and were permitted by God with the purpose of testing men (ii. 38, iii. 4); for those who approach this book with a pure mind and love to God are able to extract from it the truth which is in harmony with the original revelation, whereas others cleave to what is false in it (iii. 10, 42). As even the scribes belonged to the

latter class, the truth remained a secret of the few, for the many it was lost again (ix. 7 f.).

Therefore God has once more caused the true prophet to appear in Jesus. In Him was repeated the incarnation, which first took place in Adam, of the true prophet, the good Spirit or the Son, who from the beginning was destined to be the ruler of the world to come. He therefore taught and prophesied as the omniscient, disclosed the interpretation of the Old Testament, abolished the false commandments about sacrifice, and restored the true religion of Adam and Moses for all men, including the heathen. To this end he performed miracles, sinlessly endured all temptations, and did not hesitate to shed His blood in martyr-sufferings (iii. 19). Christ is, it is expressly asserted, not Himself God, for there is but one sole God, but He is nevertheless "full of Deity" (*θειότητος γέμων*, i. 6), the incarnation of the Son who was from the first begotten of God. To the question of Simon, whether He who is of God is not also Himself God, Peter answers, in the first place, We cannot say that, for we have not heard it from Christ, who never called Himself God, but only the Son of all-ruling God. Then he goes on to suggest to his opponent that the Son, as begotten, is to be distinguished from the unbegotten or self-begotten (*αὐτογέννητος*) God. The souls of other men also have come forth from God, and are therefore of like nature with Him, but they are not therefore gods. It is only in the same sense as they that Christ could be called God, for "He had just the same that all have" (xvi. 14-16). The author's meaning is therefore obviously this. The Divine Spirit which dwells in humanity, as a

whole, has revealed itself more purely in some men than in others. Such he considers to have been Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Christ. Among these eight men, specially endowed with the Spirit, there stand out Adam, Moses, and Christ, as mediators of revelation and law-givers for whole epochs of history. They are therefore held to be manifestations of the "true prophet" *sensu eminenti*. Christ is therefore not distinguished in nature from these predecessors; He did not bring a wholly new revelation, but only brought into the fullest light and made a common possession of mankind that religion which had already been given in Adam, but had constantly been obscured and falsified. Until Christ, the teaching of the true prophet had only been imparted in secret to those who were worthy, but Christ, out of compassion for the souls of all men, preached it openly and for all, even for the heathen (i. 11, iii. 19). In this sense Christianity is, it is true, identical with the primal religion of Adam and with the genuine Mosaic religion, but, on the other hand, it stands higher than Judaism and the ethnic religions, because it eliminates the errors which have crept into these religions, restores the pure truth of the primal religion, and abolishes the national limitations of the religions of the past, elevating truth into the position of a world-religion. It therefore makes no essential difference in what form of the true prophet a man believes, if only he proves his faith by his deeds, and recognises the other forms of faith as having a right to subsist alongside of his own. Since it is one teaching which was made known through both Moses and Jesus, God accepts any

man who believes in either of these. But the purpose of belief in a teacher is the doing of that which is commanded by God. Therefore neither will the Hebrews be condemned for not recognising Jesus, so long as they do what was revealed by Moses and do not hate the Jesus who is unknown to them, nor will those of the Gentiles be condemned who know nothing about Moses, so long as they do what they were told to do by Jesus and do not hate the Moses whom they do not know. It is no use whatever to call the teachers "Lord," unless a man shows himself by his deeds to be their servant (Matt. vii. 21), for it is not saying that counts, but doing. In any case, therefore, good works are necessary; if, in addition, it is vouchsafed to a man to recognise both teachers as preaching one doctrine, that man may be called rich in God, for he has grasped the old as at the same time new, and the new as old (viii. 6 f.). Here we may see the author of the Homilies' own confession of faith, that of a high-minded rationalist of the second century, whom we must not blame for identifying the Christian religion with the religion of humanity as understood by Hellenism.

Only in one respect is a positive limitation given to this "religion within the confines of pure reason": baptism is declared to be necessary to salvation. How that is to be united with the theory described above, it is difficult to see. How can the author simply describe it as an ordinance (*δὲγμα*) of God that no unbaptized person can enter His kingdom (xiii. 21 *et al.*), when the "true prophet" in Adam and Moses certainly did not teach this, and when he himself says elsewhere, "sufficient unto salvation

is the love of man to God" (iii. 8)? He may, no doubt, have felt the necessity of accommodating his ethical religion in this point to Church teaching, and of preserving at the same time a piece of ancient Gnostic cultus-mysticism. At any rate, whenever he comes to speak of the saving value of baptism, his language always takes a half orthodox, half Gnostic and mystic character. Baptism, he says with the Church, is for the forgiveness of sins, for re-birth or birth unto God, for holiness and blessedness (xi. 26 f., vii. 8). But he conceives of this effect of baptism in a thoroughly Gnostic fashion as operated by a magic power, resident in the water, of quenching the fire of the demons. Water has from the first (from the creation) a power of compassion which frees men from future punishment: "Therefore flee to the water, for this alone can quench the heat of fire!" (xi. 26). There is a peculiar doctrine in the *Recognitions* that baptism has taken the place of the Old Testament sacrifices, which have been done away with, as the guarantee of the forgiveness of sins for those who repent of their former sins and testify to their purpose of living according to God's will by receiving baptism, which was established by God for this end (*Rec.* i. 39). There can be no question here of a "symbol of the death of Christ"; baptism is conceived, after the analogy of sacrifice, as a sign of human subjection to the will of God and Divine acceptance of this submission.

But with baptism must be associated the ethical service of a holy life. As the motives for this, the fear and the love of God are combined, quite on the lines of Biblical and ecclesiastical ethics, as the two



equally prescribed remedies for sin, which everyone must use according to his special temperament (xvii. 12). The chief requirements of morality are, according to the Homilies, universal love to men, in which we are to be imitators of God, who is good to all (xii. 26), and ascetic abstinence and purity. Since this sensuous world is the domain of the devil, the citizens of the future Kingdom of Christ ought not to call any of the things of this world their own: all property is sin for them (xv. 7). Their food is to be vegetable, for through flesh food the demons exercise their influence, and it was they who first tempted men to eat flesh. The Homilies also seem to reject the use of wine, since they represent Peter as celebrating the Eucharist only with bread and salt (xiv. 1). The rejection of marriage, which is elsewhere usually the consequence of the Gnostic dualism, and which might be expected in view of the low estimate of woman (*sup.*, p. 386), is not taught in the Homilies; on the contrary, early marriage is recommended to the young, and faithfulness in marriage is highly praised, Matthidia, the mother of Clement, being held up as an example. To this result both Jewish morality and opposition to Marcionism contribute.

The same two tendencies underlie also the Clementine ideal of the Church. The Church is the earthly representation of the future kingdom, the ruler of which is the Son of God, Christ. The representatives of its invisible Head are the bishops, who sit in the seat of Christ. The bishops (Clement, Zacchæus) are appointed by Peter with prayer and laying on of hands, that the multitude of believers may be obedient to one, and so may do all things in harmony, just as

in civil life the rule of one is in the interest of the peace of the citizens. But the bishop is not to exercise his power like an earthly ruler, but like a servant, like a father, like a physician, like a shepherd, watching with all solicitude over the well-being of his flock. Everyone is bound in conscience to obey him, for he stands in the place of Christ; disobedience to him is therefore disobedience to Christ and God. In order to give him adequate leisure to fulfil his spiritual obligations, the Church must provide for his support. The presbyters must zealously carry out his directions; they are to exercise oversight over the moral conduct of the members of the Church and to compose differences among them, but they are to submit their decisions to the bishop for his sanction. The deacons are to aid the bishop in looking after the poor. But all are to honour the "throne of Christ" just as they have been commanded to honour the "seat of Moses" (the Jewish scribes), even in a case where its occupant should be regarded as a sinner (iii. 60-72, and the Epistle of Clement to James). So far these directions do not go beyond the ideal of the Church which is found in the Ignatian letters, but whereas there the episcopate was still merely a congregational office within the individual church, in the Homilies the further step is made to a Church office, for James is represented as the bishop of bishops and bishop of the whole Church (in the letters of Peter and Clement). The position which James, the brother of the Lord, had formerly occupied, and his successors had claimed, in relation to the Palestinian churches, is made by Clement the prototype of an episcopate of the universal Church such as the Roman Church

had contended for in its struggles with numerous heretics and schismatics from the end of the second century onwards.<sup>1</sup>

The affinity of these writings with the teaching of the Elkesaites (vol. iii. p. 138) and Ebionites is so obvious that we are justified in concluding that the doctrine of the Homilies is a development of the Elkesaite doctrine in the direction of orthodox Church teaching.<sup>2</sup> Circumcision, which was retained by the Elkesaites, is abandoned in the Homilies, and its place is taken by baptism, which, as performed once for all, no longer stands on the same footing as the repeated ceremonial lustrations and is also no longer connected with the invocation of the seven witnesses or spirits of the elements (an echo of this is found only in the *Contestatio* which is attached to the letter of Peter to James). There is a close resemblance between the teaching of the two systems regarding the higher Christ, the Son of God and great King of the future world, who had appeared in human form first in Adam, then in the patriarchs, and finally in Jesus, in order, as the true prophet, to reveal the right religion. But of a repeated reincarnation of the Christ-Spirit in the future, such as the Elkesaites appear, from *Philosophumena* x. 29, to have taught, there is no longer any mention in the Homilies. Here the appearances of the true prophet are restricted in Adam, Moses, and Jesus. Jesus is the highest teacher, who partly confirms the revelation given in Adam and Moses, partly purifies it from false accretions and corruptions, and He is the great King

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *de Pudic.* i., is the first to call the Roman bishop—though of course ironically—“Pontifex maximus, bishop of bishops.”

<sup>2</sup> Uhlhorn, *Homilien und Rekognitionen des Klemens*, p. 399.

of the future world, to whom the devil as the ruler of the present, passing world is subordinated.<sup>1</sup> Further, while the polemic against Paul which is characteristic of the Ebionites and Elkesaites is kept up in the Homilies, it is veiled by attacking him in the character of Simon and extended into a polemic against Marcionism and heathenism. And in order to maintain against Marcion the essential identity of Judaism and Christianity, the Homilies have not merely, like these predecessors, confined themselves to the rejection of the sacrificial system, but applied so radical a criticism to the Old Testament as a whole that the place of the Jewish legal religion is taken by a rationalistic, Hellenistic moralism. A factor which contributed to this development of the earlier Gnostic Jewish Christianity was the influence of the Stoic philosophy, which unmistakably betrays itself in the pantheistic features of the doctrine of God, in the cosmology (formation of the world out of four elements), in the rationalistic theory of knowledge (inward revelation by the implanted *πνεῦμα*, not outward by visions), and finally in the ethics (freedom from the world of sense, and general *φιλανθρωπία*). In this aspect the Clementines belong to the apologetic literature in which Christianity took Greek philosophy as an ally in the struggle against pagan religion.

<sup>1</sup> The syzygy of Christ and the devil, which is peculiar to the Homilies, reminds us of the doctrine which Epiphanius (*Hær.*, xxx. 16) ascribes to the Ebionites: that God had appointed both Christ and the devil to be rulers, the former of the future world, the latter of the present.

## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXII

#### THE PREACHING OF PETER. THE APOLOGY OF ARISTIDES

THE distinction of being the earliest apologetic writing may be claimed for the canonical Book of the Acts, which, as we said above (ii. 191 f., 213 f., 250, 268 ff.), is mainly guided by the purpose of exhibiting Christianity to the Roman authorities and the culture of the heathen world as the true religion, in harmony both with the Jewish revelation and the wisdom of the heathen poets, which puts in the place of the outward Temple service and sacrificial system of both Jews and heathen the ethical and spiritual worship of the one God, Creator, and Judge of the world, who was revealed by Christ to all men; further, as a religion which, from the blameless life of its confessors, should appear worthy of toleration and approval on the part of the State. These thoughts, which the Hellenistic author of Acts puts into the mouth of Paul in his missionary and apologetic discourses to the heathen,<sup>1</sup> form the standing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acts xiv. 15 ff., xvii. 22-31, xxiv. 14 ff. On the discourse at the Areopagus in Acts xvii., P. Wendland (*Christentum und*

theme which in the apologists of the second century is variously worked out according to the occasion and the culture of the author. The differences of doctrine between Christians are here of course little in evidence as compared with the principles of faith and morals common to all Christians, in which Christianity shows itself to be the higher and alone true religion, in contrast with the earlier religions, these being sometimes simply judged erroneous, sometimes as relatively, but only relatively, true preparatory stages. I shall give first a description of the apologetic writings which have come down to us from early Christianity and afterwards a summary account of the theology of the apologists of the second century.

Among the four apocryphal works bearing the name of Peter mentioned by Eusebius (*H.E.*, III. iii. 2) as writings which are not to be counted among the Church Scriptures, and of which no Church author has made use, there figures, along with the Acts, the Gospel, and the Apocalypse, which have been discussed earlier (vol. iii. pp. 207, 214, iv. p. 260), the Preaching (*κήρυγμα*) of Peter. That it must have been held in esteem in the second century may be concluded from the fact that—contrary to the assertion of Eusebius—it is quoted by Clement of Alexandria no less than eight times,<sup>1</sup> six of these with the full formula of citation: “Peter says in the

*Hellenismus*, p. 7) remarks: “As perhaps the earliest documentary evidence of a conscious attempt to conciliate Hellenism this discourse is of the greatest importance.”

<sup>1</sup> *Strom.*, I. xxix. 182, II. xv. 68, VI. v. 39 ff., 43; vi. 48, vii. 58, xv. 128; *Ecl. Proph.* lviii.

Preaching" (Πέτρος ἐν τῷ κηρύγματι), and that, according to a statement of Origen,<sup>1</sup> it was also used by the Valentinian Heracleon. This implies that the Preaching of Peter was in existence about 160 A.D., and was then held to be a genuine work of Peter, for it is used as such by Heracleon and Clement. Origen, on the other hand, says that it is difficult to discover whether the book is genuine, spurious, or of a mixed character. Why it later disappeared from tradition we do not know. Zahn conjectures that it had either from the first been also circulated under another title, or that, in consequence of its main content having been worked up in a later writing, it had come to be forgotten, and that in this writing with the different title it practically disappeared.<sup>2</sup> Another problematical point is the relation of this quite orthodox Preaching of Peter with the Ebionite "Preachings" of Peter which are several times mentioned in the Clementine Homilies. Is there any historical connection between them? And if so, which of the two, the orthodox or the Ebionite, was the earlier? Zahn conjectures that in the Epistle of Peter to James, which precedes the Clementine Homilies by way of introduction, the complaint about the perversion of the true teaching of Peter contains an allusion to the strongly anti-Jewish Preaching of Peter,<sup>3</sup> but the perversion alluded to is much more likely to be the Pauline teaching. So long as we know nothing more of the orthodox apologetic Preaching of Peter than the few

<sup>1</sup> *In Ev. Joh.*, tom. XIII. xvii. The passage there quoted from Heracleon agrees with that in Clement, *Strom.*, VI. v. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Zahn, *Gesch. des N.Tlichen Kanon*, ii. 825.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 822.

fragments in Clement of Alexandria<sup>1</sup> it will scarcely be possible to answer the question regarding their relation to the Ebionite Preachings of Peter in the Clementines.

The content of the missionary preaching which the twelve disciples and apostles were commissioned by the Lord, after His resurrection, to make known to all men is summed up in two main points: knowledge of the One God and revelation of that which is to come (viz. the Judgment) by means of the faith in Christ, to the end that those who believe thereon may be saved and that others may not be able to excuse themselves by saying that they have heard nothing about it.<sup>2</sup> These were precisely the main points of Paul's preaching at Athens according to Acts xvii. The monotheistic doctrine of God is more fully expounded as follows: "It is one God who has made the origin of all things and also possesses the power of bringing them to an end, the Invisible who sees all things, the Incomprehensible, who comprehends all things, He who has need of nothing, but whom all need, and through whom all things are, the Inconceivable, the Eternal, the Uncreated who has created the universe by His omnipotent word." The last statement is to be understood in the sense of Heb. i. 3, not of John i. 1 f.; the description of Christ, which occurs in three quotations,<sup>3</sup> as Law "and Logos" might rather be thought of as referring to the world-ruling Logos of

<sup>1</sup> Collected and furnished with a commentary by E. von Dobschütz, *Das Kerygma Petri*, Leipzig, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Clem., *Strom.*, VI. vi. 48, v. 39 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Clem., *Strom.*, I. xxix. 182, II. xv. 68: ὁ Πέτρος ἐν τῷ κηρύγματι νόμον καὶ λόγον τὸν κύριον προσεῖπεν; *Ecl. Proph.* lviii.



Stoic-Philonian speculation, which is also spoken of as Law (=order of the world). The fact that "Law" precedes "Logos" makes it more probable, however, that we are to think of the new law which He gives as the content of the revelation of Christ,<sup>1</sup> the word of revelation being possibly personified, but not certainly so. To the statement of the fundamental principle of the unity of God is attached in the Preaching of Peter the commandment not to worship Him after the manner of either the Jews or the Greeks. For the Greeks have in their ignorance shaped dead matter into images of the gods and worshipped them, and have offered animals, which were intended for human food, as dead sacrifices to dead gods, and in doing so ungratefully contemned the true God. But "the Jews also, who think they know God, do not understand Him, but serve angels and archangels, the month and the moon, for when the moon does not shine they do not keep the so-called first Sabbath, nor New-moon, nor Passover, nor [any other] Feast, nor the great day [of Atonement]." Here, therefore, in the same way as in Gal. iv. 8 ff., the Jewish keeping of feasts fixed by the moon is treated as on the same level with the heathen service of the weak and miserable powers of the elements. In like manner the Gnostics referred the giving of the Jewish law to the archons, who in the last resort are nothing else than star-spirits. It seems therefore that this widely current view of the Jewish cultus was also shared by Church teachers.

The apologist preacher then proceeds to emphasise

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Hermas, Simil.* viii. 3, 2: ὁ δὲ νόμος οὗτος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἐστὶ κηρυχθεὶς εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς ("This law is the Son of God, who is preached to the ends of the earth").

what is new in Christianity: "Conscientiously and uprightly learn and preserve that which has been delivered to you, worshipping God in a new fashion, through Christ, as we find in the Scriptures that the Lord said, 'I give unto you a new covenant, not as I gave unto your fathers at the Mount of Horeb.' And a new covenant He has given unto you, for the religion of the Greeks and the Jews is obsolete, but ye are those who after a new fashion worship God, a third race of men, that of the Christians." But however much the preacher may hold Judaism, as a religion of Law and ritual cultus, to be obsolete, and to have been superseded by the new covenant, he is nevertheless far from despising the Old Testament revelation in Gnostic fashion. On the contrary, he makes Peter say:<sup>1</sup> "We have opened the Scriptures which we have received from the prophets, which, partly in parables, partly in dark sayings, partly directly and literally, speak of Christ Jesus. And there we found set down both His coming [to earth], His death, His cross, and all the other tortures inflicted on Him by the Jews, and also His resurrection and exaltation to heaven before the judgment upon Jerusalem, as well as all that He was to suffer and what should come to pass after Him. When we recognised this we believed in God, because of what was written about Him [Christ]. For we recognised that God had really ordained this, and so we say nothing without the testimony of Scripture." We see from this how the Church, for all its rejection of the Jewish Law, nevertheless clung to the Old Testament as a Divine revelation, because it found the story of Christ and the judgment upon Jerusalem predicted, partly directly,

<sup>1</sup> Clem., *Strom.*, VI. xv. 128.

partly indirectly (by means of images and allegories), and used this argument from prediction as the chief support of its apologetics.

Finally, we have to mention the curious statement of the Preaching of Peter,<sup>1</sup> that Jesus commanded His disciples to go out into the world as missionaries after twelve years (from His resurrection). This seems to rest on a secret Gnostic tradition which is found also in the Acts of Peter and John, and in the Gnostic book *Pistis Sophia*; in the Clementine Homilies and Recognitions, too, a seven years' period of waiting is presupposed, before the beginning of the apostolic missionary journeys. The motive of this legend is perhaps to be seen in the desire of the Gnostics to find support for their esoteric doctrinal tradition in posthumous instructions given to the disciples by Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

Eusebius tells us (*H.E.*, IV. iii. 3) that the Athenian philosopher Aristides wrote an Apology for the Christian Faith dedicated to the Emperor Hadrian. He does not seem to have seen it himself, and until recent times it was supposed to be lost. Now a fortunate series of finds has enabled us to reconstruct it. First, there was discovered an Armenian translation of the first two chapters; secondly, a complete Syrian translation; third, a Greek recension interpolated with the legend of Barlaam and Joasaph. From these three versions R. Seeberg has restored the original text so far as possible (in Zahn's *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Kanon*, v. 159-414), and published a German transla-

<sup>1</sup> Clem., *Strom.*, VI. v. 43: μετὰ δώδεκα ἔτη ἐξέλθετε εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Von Dobschütz, *ut sup.*, p. 53.

tion with introduction and critical notes. From this I give the following abstract.

In the first place it appears from the superscription, which is given in the Syrian text, that the Apology was dedicated not to the Emperor Hadrian, but to his successor Antoninus Pius, and was therefore written in his reign (138-161)—whether towards the beginning or the end of this period cannot be determined with certainty, not even from its relation to Justin, for his Apology and that of Aristides seem to be independent of each other. The arrangement is simple. At the beginning, in chapter i., is placed the statement of the true conception of God. Then, on the basis of this, the truth or error of the various religions is judged, the religions being divided into those of the barbarians, Greeks, Jews, and Christians, each of which is traced back to a historical beginning (chapter ii.). In iii.-vii. the errors of the barbarians, in viii.-xi. those of the Greeks, in xii. those of the Egyptians, and in xiii. those of the Greek philosophers, are described; in xiv. the truth and error of the Jewish religion is estimated, and in xv.-xvii. the truth of the Christian religion is proved from its fruits in the morally pure and noble life of Christians.

It is characteristic of the popular philosopher Aristides that the conception of God which forms his starting-point has a philosophical, not a religious basis. A consideration of the wonderful structure of the world leads to the recognition that there must be a mover and orderer of all things who is stronger than that which is moved, and is therefore God. To know His nature in a positive fashion transcends our understanding; it is sufficient to know that He is the mover of the world, the God of all, who has

made all things for the sake of man, and that it is therefore right to fear Him and not to oppress men (or to serve Him alone and to love others as one's self). Next, to guard against making God finite and anthropomorphic, a series of negative statements regarding His being are set forth, in which the ontological conception of "the absolute" is paraphrased. He is unbegotten, uncreated, an eternal nature, without beginning or end, immortal, perfect, and inconceivable; perfect because without wants, having need of nothing, while everything has need of Him; without beginning or end, because indissoluble; without name and without form, because otherwise He would be on the same footing as created things; He is neither male nor female, for otherwise he would be subject to passion; He is not contained by the heavens, but contains all things visible and invisible within Himself; He is without adversaries, without wrath and anger, since nothing is able to resist Him; He is without error and forgetfulness, for He is wholly wisdom and knowledge. Since everything exists by Him, He needs no offering, but all beings have need of Him.

The criticism of heathen religions is first directed against the worship of idols, and then goes on to show that the elements earth, fire, water, and wind, and the sun, are not gods but creatures of God and intended for the service of men; and the deification of mortal men of ancient times (heroes) is equally an error. In the Greek mythology, the moral weaknesses and crimes of the gods receive special censure as unworthy of the pure nature of the Deity and corrupting to the morals of men. Still more foolish is the religion of the Egyptians, who deify irrational

animals. And if the Greek poets and philosophers say that the nature of all their gods is one, that is contradicted by the stories of contentions and mutual persecutions among the gods. In short, all these hymns and legends of the heathen religions are empty words, mere sound in which there is no power whatever.

The Jews, indeed, have come nearer to the truth, inasmuch as they worship only the one God and Creator, not His works, and are imitators of God in love to man and in showing compassion to the poor and prisoners, and other excellent customs. Nevertheless they also have gone astray from the truth. They think that they are serving God, but owing to the character of their ceremonial worship their service is appropriated by the angels and not by God, because they observe Sabbaths and New Moons and the feast of unleavened bread, and the Great Day (of Atonement), and fasting and circumcision and dietary laws. This condemnation of the Jewish ritual law is, not only as regards the thought, but even to the words, so closely allied with that in the Preaching of Peter (*sup.* p. 401) that it is probable that Aristides used this work.

Christians take their origin and their name from Jesus the Christ, who is called the Son of God the Highest, of whom it is believed that he came down from heaven in a holy Spirit<sup>1</sup> and took flesh of

<sup>1</sup> ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ καταβάς = in a pneumatic condition, *i.e.* he descended as a holy spiritual being. The expression exactly corresponds with the ἐν ᾧ πορευθείς of 1 Pet. iii. 19. The same thought is found in Hermas, *Sim.* ix. 1; 2 Clement ix. 5; and Theophilus, *ad Autol.* ii. 10. Cf. Seeberg in Zahn's *Untersuchungen*, v. 330.

a Hebrew virgin, and so the Son of God dwelt in a daughter of man. He who was born of the race of the Hebrews was pierced by the Jews, died and was buried, and it is said that after three days He rose again and went up to heaven. Then His twelve disciples went out into the various parts of the world and taught men about His majesty, in all honesty and humility (ii. 6 f.). Now these Christians have more than all other peoples found the truth. They know God the sole Creator, of whom all things are, from whom they have received the commandments which they have inscribed in their minds, and observe because of the hope and expectation of the future world. Then (xv. 4 ff.) Aristides draws a beautiful picture of the Christian life, showing how it is distinguished above all others by uprightness, purity, and brotherly love. "They do not worship idols or eat meats offered to idols. What they would not that others should do to them, they do not to others. Those who ill-treat them they succour and make their friends, and to their enemies they do good. Their wives are pure as virgins, their daughters gentle, and their men abstain from unchastity. They walk in all humility and kindness, and no deceit is found in them. They love one another, do not fail to care for the widows, and deliver orphans from their oppressors. He who has, gives to him that has not, without grudging. If they see a stranger they bring him into their dwelling and rejoice over him as over a brother, for they call brethren, not those who are so in body but those who are so in spirit and in God. If one of their poor dies, they look after his burial; if any is imprisoned or persecuted for the sake of the name of Christ, they all take his suffering upon them

and seek to deliver him. If any is poor or needy, they fast two or three days, in order to supply the poor man's need of food. They observe the commandments of their Messiah with great zeal, and live righteously and honestly as the Lord their God has commanded them. In the morning, and at all hours, they praise God for His benefits and thank Him for their food and drink. When a righteous man departs from this world they rejoice and give thanks to God and accompany the body as though it were journeying from one place to another. When a child is born, they praise God; if it dies soon again, they praise God the more that it has passed through this world without sin. But if any dies in ungodliness, they weep bitterly for him, since he goes to his punishment. As those who know God they ask of Him such things as it is meet for Him to give and for them to receive. But they do not cry aloud in the ears of the multitude the good works which they do; they take care that no one notices them, and hide their gifts as a man hides a treasure. They strive to be righteous, as men who expect to see their Messiah and to receive from Him the promised reward in great glory. Truly great and wonderful is Christian teaching for him who will consider and understand it; and truly this people is a new people, and there is a Divine element in it. And truly blessed is the race of the Christians above all men upon earth. Therefore let their traducers leave off alleging against the Christians that which is not true, and rather worship with them the true God, in order to escape the terrible judgment which through Jesus the Messiah shall come upon the whole race of men."



## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXIII

#### THE APOLOGIES OF JUSTIN, PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR

AMONG the Early Christian Apologists the most significant and typical figure of this whole epoch of Church history is Justin Martyr. Born about 100 A.D. at Flavia Neapolis (Sychem, Shechem) in Samaria, of heathen parents, he had in his youth earnestly devoted himself to the study of Greek philosophy, but as regards the questions which chiefly moved him, concerning God and the soul, he had not been able to attain complete satisfaction either from the Stoics or the Peripatetics, the Pythagoreans, or even the Platonists. While he was once meditating on the last-named philosophy, by which he felt himself, indeed, much exalted and advanced, there met him an aged Christian man, who by his searching questions shook his confidence in the capacity of the human mind to discover, of itself, anything about the nature of God and the soul, and pointed him to revealed truth, which pious men of ancient days had communicated to men on the ground of a Divine inspiration and without proofs, and which had been confirmed by the

actual fulfilment of their prophecies in Jesus Christ. This conversation made the deepest impression upon him, so that he felt himself kindled with love to the prophets and the friends of Christ as with a fire, and recognised in their teaching the only certain and valuable philosophy.<sup>1</sup> This impression was confirmed by his soon becoming convinced, when he once began to observe the Christians, that the ill which was said of them rested on calumny, and that, on the contrary, the moral life, and especially the courageous suffering and death of Christians, for the sake of their faith, was the best confirmation of the truth of their doctrine. So Justin the Philosopher became a Christian. The practical wisdom for the conduct of life, the satisfaction of his ethico-religious needs, which he had sought in the Greek philosophical schools and had only partially found — for the mutual contradictions of the various Schools were in themselves sufficient to make a certain knowledge impossible—all this he found in the revelation of the Divine Logos in Jesus, for which the prophets had prepared the way and which was practically confirmed by the holy living and dying of the Christians.<sup>2</sup> But even as a Christian, Justin did not cast off the philosopher, but made it his task to exhibit Christianity to the culture of the heathen world as the true “philosophy,” resting on Divine revelation, or as the knowledge of God and practical wisdom. This purpose is especially served by the two “Apologies” which he addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, probably about 150 A.D.

<sup>1</sup> So he narrates in the introduction to the *Dialogue with Trypho*, ii.—viii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Apol.*, II. xii. f.

The First Apology falls into three parts, ii.–xii., xiii.–lx., lxi.–lxviii. The apologist demands, in the first place, that Christians should not be punished for the name they bear, or in consequence of common prejudices, but that their life and teaching should be examined without bias. The charge of atheism had in times past been levelled against Socrates at the instigation of the demons, because he was in the service of the true Reason which desired to lead men away from the worshipping of the demons; the same is now the case in regard to the Christians, because, believing in the same Reason, which has become flesh in Jesus Christ, they hold the supposed gods to be nothing of the kind, but evil demons. They are not therefore atheists, for they worship the true God and Father of all virtues, who is without fault, and the Son who came down from Him, their teacher, and the rest of the other good angels<sup>1</sup> and the prophetic Spirit. These they worship in reason and truth (*cf.* John iv. 24) and gladly communicate what has been delivered to them to anyone who is willing to learn (vi.). This, he says, he openly confesses, for to live in deceit is not possible for him, since he desires to enter into the eternal and pure life which is with God, which is promised to those who through their works show themselves imitators of God, as Christ taught them. In the same way

<sup>1</sup> This placing of the angels as objects of worship between Son and Spirit shows how fluctuating Trinitarian conceptions still were at that time even among Church teachers. *Cf.* Apoc. i. 4 f., where the seven spirits (= angels, viii. 2) came in between Christ and God. There is a trace of a similar conception even in John i. 51. The Johannine doctrine of the "Paraclete" is not found in Justin; instead of it we have the vaguer concept "the prophetic Spirit."

Plato taught that the wicked will be punished by the judges Minos and Rhadamanthus, though only, it is true, with a thousand years of suffering for their souls, whereas according to Christian doctrine eternal torment awaits both the bodies and the souls of the wicked. But if this is held to be incredible or impossible, it is, after all, only an error like many others, for which no one is liable to be punished so long as he is not convicted of any actual crime. Further, Christians honour the Deity, not under the form of images which men have made, and not with material offerings and presents, since they know that God has no such form and that He needs nothing, but Himself bestows on men all things, and only takes pleasure in such as imitate Him in the qualities of self-mastery, righteousness, and philanthropy. For, as the Good, He at the beginning formed all things out of formless matter for the sake of men and endowed them with intellectual powers that they might by their free choice obey His will and thereby become worthy of immortality in fellowship with Him. It is true that Christians expect a Kingdom, but not, as is unjustly said of them, an earthly kingdom—if it were so, they would seek to avoid death by denying their faith—but a kingdom in the presence of God, and it is just because their hopes are not set on the things of the present that they hold death so light. In consequence of this conviction of a reward in the world to come they are the most effective supporters and promoters of peace in human society. If their principles were to become prevalent, the executioner would have nothing to do. From princes who concern themselves with virtue and philosophy, it is to be expected that they will

not act contrary to reason, nor prefer custom to truth. With this he might conclude, since his only object is to promote righteousness and truth. But since he knows how difficult it is for a soul which is impeded by ignorance to change its attitude, he will add something more for the friends of truth.

After refuting in this introductory part of his Apology the charges of atheism and hostility to the state which were brought against Christians, Justin endeavours in the second main division, xiii.-lx., to prove the truth of the Christian religion by positive arguments. He starts once more from the doctrine of God. Christians worship the Creator of the universe, not with bloody sacrifices and libations, but with prayer and thanksgiving for all His goodness; then, in the second place, His son Jesus Christ, who for that very purpose (to teach the true worship of God) came as a teacher, was born and was crucified in Judæa under the Emperor Tiberius; and, finally, in the third place, the prophetic Spirit. But since he knows that it is just this worship of a crucified man that most offends non-Christians, he will instruct them further about this "mystery." Here he follows the procedure most calculated to be serviceable to any apologetic, of first emphasising the loftiness of the ethic of Jesus, and he begins with the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount, which he very appropriately characterises thus: "His utterances were brief and pregnant, for He was no sophist, but His word was a power of God" (xiv.; *cf.* Rom. i. 16). Only those who live in accordance with these Divine commandments are really Christians, not those who merely profess Christ in words. For, "by their fruits ye

shall know them." Finally, he does not neglect to point out that the Christians are good citizens and pay their taxes willingly, following the commandment of the Lord to give unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's (xvii.). But what gives special weight to this moral teaching is, as Justin is at pains to emphasise, the conviction of the resurrection, and the reward in the world to come. Similar teaching had indeed been given by the heathen poets and philosophers (Orphics, Pythagoreans, and Platonists); why, then, should men not rather believe the Christian teaching, which alone had a Divine proof to offer, namely, the words of their Teacher, Jesus Christ? This leads up to the discussion of the "mystery" of the Person of Christ (xxi. ff.). For this also the Apologist seeks a point of attachment in the heathen mind. "When we say that the Logos, the First-begotten of God, was born without any intermixture as our Teacher, Jesus Christ, and was crucified, was dead, and rose again and ascended to heaven, we are not saying anything new, if you think of the sons of Zeus in your legends."<sup>1</sup> He mentions especially Hermes, the "interpreting word (*λόγον τὸν ἐρμηνευτικόν*) and the teacher of all," and also Æsculapius, Dionysus, Hercules, the Dioscuri, Perseus, and Bellerophon; finally, also, the deification of the Cæsars. If, he argues, sonship to God and exaltation out of death to Divine life are accepted in the case of these heroes, who were of comparatively

<sup>1</sup> The personification of the Logos in Hermes, the Messenger of the Gods, was customary in the Stoic popular philosophy and theology (Comuturs) of the period, and doubtless formed a principal source both of the Philonian and, later on, of the Christian doctrine of the Logos (*cf.* above, iii. 51).

little ethical worth, how much more are Christians justified in holding Jesus, even if He had been only a man like the others, to be worthy, if only because of His wisdom, to be called the Son of God! And if they call Him the Logos of God, in a special sense begotten of God, that is the same as when the Greeks call Hermes, who comes as the messenger of God, the Logos. Even to His birth from the Virgin, His miracles of healing, and His crucifixion, analogies are found in the stories of the sons of Zeus. But whereas these fables were invented by poets through the inspiration of demons, Christians alone know the truth, which Jesus Christ taught as the only truly begotten Son of God, His Logos, First-born, and Power, who, according to the will of God, became man, in order to convert and bring back to Him the race of men. This Justin proceeds to prove, first by pointing to the ethically blameless life of Christians in contrast to the heathen and to the Gnostic heretics (Simon, Menander, Marcion), who for that very reason were not persecuted, whereas all sorts of shameful doings are falsely attributed to orthodox Christians, shameful crimes such as are openly committed by the heathen (xxiv.-xxix.). He then turns to his leading argument for the truth of the Christian faith, an argument drawn from the predictions of the ancient prophets, in whose writings the whole of the life of Jesus, from the miraculous birth to the ascension and the missionary preaching of Christianity, was foretold centuries in advance. This argument (xxx.-liii.) was vastly more impressive for the contemporaries of Justin, for whom the boldest allegorical interpretation of Scripture was the most natural thing in the world, than it is for us, who have so little taste for the arti-

ficialities and arbitrariness of these interpretations, that we are disposed to judge an apologetic of this kind too unfavourably. Finally, our Apologist comes back to the analogies of heathen mythology, and seeks to guard against the danger to the Christian faith which seems to lie in these resemblances, by referring all these legends to the inspiration of demons, who maliciously counterfeited the predictions of the prophets, and who are also at the present time the instigators of all heresies. Plato, also, had borrowed his doctrine of the formation of the world from formless matter, and of the extension of the World-soul in the form of an X (of the cross), and, finally, that of the future burning of the world, from Moses. Thus all the heathen have imitated the doctrines of the Christians, as every Christian, even though uncultured, if he is of wise and believing mind, is aware (lx.). These assertions, so exactly reversing the actual state of the case, are very characteristic of ancient dogmatics, which wholly lacked our instinct for reality, and especially our sense of historical development.

In the last section (lxi. ff.) Justin gives an interesting picture of the usages then obtaining in the divine service of the Christian churches. "Those who are convinced of the truth of our doctrine, and promise to live in accordance with it, are taught to petition God with prayer and fasting for the forgiveness of their past sins; then they are taken to the water and born again in the same manner as we ourselves, for they are washed, in the name of the Father of all things and Lord God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. For Christ Himself said, 'Unless ye be born again, ye shall not enter



into the kingdom of heaven.’<sup>1</sup> This washing is also called ‘illumination’ (*φωτισμός*), because those who learn these things are illuminated in their minds. . . . Then we bring the baptized person to the assembled brethren and offer prayer in common for him and us, that since we have learned the truth it may be vouchsafed to us to be found such as lead a good life and keep the commandments, in order that we may obtain eternal salvation. After the prayers we salute one another with the brotherly kiss. After that there is brought to the president of the brethren a loaf and a cup of water (? with an admixture of wine<sup>2</sup>). He takes it and offers up praise and thanksgiving to the Father of all things in the name of the Son and the Spirit, and in this way performs the thanksgiving (Eucharist) for all that God has given us. When he has concluded the thanksgiving, all the assembled people cries Amen! Then those who are called deacons distribute to each of those present some of the bread (and wine) and water of the Eucharist, and they carry it to the absent. And this food we call the Eucharist. Of it none may partake unless he holds our doctrines to be true and has caused himself to be washed in the laver of forgiveness of sins and regeneration, and lives according to the commandments of Christ. For we do not take it as

<sup>1</sup> The formula is not in exact accordance with John iii. 3, 5 (where instead of *ἀναγεννηθῆτε* we find *γεννηθῆ τις ἄνωθεν*, and instead of *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, β. τοῦ θεοῦ*), but it is found similarly in Clem., *Hom.* xi. 26, and in Clem. Alex., *Protrept.*, ix. 82 (here combined with Matt. xviii. 3). The common source was probably the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

<sup>2</sup> This is probably a later interpolation. Cf. Harnack, “Brot und Wasser die eucharistischen Elemente bei Justin,” *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vii., 1892.

common bread and a common drink, but we have been taught that even as Jesus Christ our Saviour, who was incarnate by means of the Word of God,<sup>1</sup> for our sake had flesh and blood, so also the food which is consecrated by means of the word of prayer which proceeds from Him, by which our flesh and blood is nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus. For the Apostles have handed on to us the tradition in the memoirs written by them which we call Gospels of an ordinance given to them by Jesus as follows: He took the bread, gave thanks and spoke, saying, 'Do this in remembrance of Me; this is My body.' And likewise He took the cup, gave thanks and said, 'This is My blood.' And he delivered it to them only. And this very thing the evil demons have imitated in the tradition of the Mysteries of Mithra,<sup>2</sup> for you know, or can learn, that in these ceremonies of initiation bread and a cup with water are set forth with a formula of blessing. Since that time we always remind one

<sup>1</sup> The Logos is thought of as the subject of the incarnation. The expression *διὰ λόγου θεοῦ σαρκοποιηθεὶς* I. X. is chosen for the sake of the parallel with the following *τὴν δι' εὐχῆς λόγου τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῦ εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφήν*. The meaning is that in the word of prayer at the Eucharist which went forth from Christ the Divine power of the Logos works in such a fashion that His incarnation in Jesus is continued in those who, through taking the consecrated food filled with Divine powers, make this into the power of their own life—a conception quite familiar to the ancient animistic way of thinking, which has its parallels in Paul (1 Cor. x. 16), Ignatius, John, and the *Didache* (i. 418 ff., iv. 39 f., 233 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> In saying this Justin has either overlooked the temporal priority of the Mysteries of Mithra or else he thinks of the "imitation" of them as prophetic in the same way as he represents the Old Testament prophecy of the Son of God, Christ, as imitated by the demons in the heathen myths; cf. pp. 416 *sup.*, 426 *infr.*

another of this, and we aid our poor with our means and always keep together. And at all our offerings we praise the Creator of the universe through His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. And on the day called 'Sunday' there is held a meeting of all who live either in the city or the country, at which the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time allows. After the reading is concluded the president gives a discourse in which he exhorts the people to imitate these excellent things. Then all rise up together and offer prayer." [After the prayer takes place the Eucharist, the former description of which is repeated.] "The wealthy and willing contribute as much as they think fitting out of their means, and this is collected and deposited with the president. And with this he relieves the widows and orphans and any others who through sickness or other cause are in want, and prisoners, and strangers that come from a distance, and, in short, assists all who require help. On Sunday we hold our common assemblies, because that is the first day of the week, on which God changed darkness and matter and made the world, and because on that day also our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. For it was on the day preceding the day of Saturn that they crucified Him, and on the day following it, which is the Sunday,<sup>1</sup> He appeared to His apostles and disciples and taught

<sup>1</sup> In this, too, Justin might have spoken of "imitation by the wicked demons," since the professors of the religion of Mithra kept the first day of the week as the day sacred to their sun-god, Mithra. How far this keeping of the Sunday in the Mithra religion, which was the earlier, may have contributed to the Christian custom, I leave an open question.

them what we have here offered for your consideration.”

The closing chapter repeats the urgent petition that justice may be shown to the Christians, an appeal being made to a rescript of the Emperor Hadrian, favourable to the Christians, addressed to the proconsul of Asia, Minucius Fundanus, of which a copy is attached to the Apology.

The Second Apology of Justin, which many—without, as it seems to me, any sufficient ground—consider to be a mere appendix to the first, was occasioned by the execution of three Roman Christians under Urbicus the prefect of the city, and by the calumnies against the Christians which the cynic philosopher Crescens had circulated at Rome, to ingratiate himself with the populace, and from personal hatred of Justin (ii., iii.). Justin accuses him of being a friend, not of wisdom (as the name philosopher implies), but of vainglory, since he disregards the noble saying of Socrates, “We must honour the truth above any man.” Then he explains why Christians may not follow the counsel which their opponents had given them in contempt for their martyr courage – to kill themselves in order to come to their God, and not trouble the authorities (iv.). But if it be asked how it is that Christians are not delivered from persecution by the protection of their God,<sup>1</sup> he explains this like all the rest of the evil of the world, which was created good by God, as due to the instigation of the fallen angels, and the demons who

<sup>1</sup> That this was often urged against Christians is testified by Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, IV. xi. 80 ff.

were begotten by them of women.<sup>1</sup> It is they also who, by giving themselves out to be gods, have been responsible for the polytheism of the heathen (v.). Christians, on the other hand, believe only in one God, to whom, since He is unbegotten, they give no special name, but whom, in reference to His goodness and power, they call Father, God, Creator, Lord and Ruler. But His Son, who alone is called Son in the fullest sense, the Logos, who before all the creatures was with Him and was begotten, when He at the beginning created and ordered all things through Him, is called Christ as being the Anointed, by whom all things are ordered, and Jesus as man and Saviour. For He became man also, according to the will of God the Father, born for the sake of believing men, and to destroy the demons, as is evident from the fact that Christians are able by the name of Christ to drive out the demons from sick persons who cannot be healed by others (vi.). It is indeed due only to the Christians that the judgment does not even now destroy by fire the whole world with all the evil angels and demons, since it is for their sake that God, who regards them as the final cause of nature, has postponed the destruction of all things. For it is not on the necessity of fate, as the Stoics suppose, that the course of the world and the destiny of each man depends, but on the free will of man and the influence of the demons who raise up persecution against the good, like Socrates, but give a happy life to the evil, like Sardanapalus or Epicurus. But since all have sinned freely, they will all, men and angels alike, pay the penalty in eternal fire. It

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Apoc. Enoch, vi.-viii., xv., lxix. ; and similarly the Book of Jubilees, iv., v., x.

belongs to the essential nature of the creature to be capable of either evil or good, for there would be nothing praiseworthy in it unless it were in its power to turn to either one or the other (vii.). But all who endeavour to live according to reason, and avoid that which is base, have always been hated by the demons. It is therefore the less to be wondered at if these endeavour to rouse hatred against men who live not only according to a part of the reason which is implanted like a seed in the human race, as the Stoics do, but according to the knowledge of the whole Logos, that is, of Christ (viii.). All that has been rightly spoken by philosophers or law-givers has been arrived at by them owing to their partial knowledge of the Logos. But because they did not know the Logos in its completeness as it is in Christ, they have often contradicted themselves. While Socrates held it to be difficult to discover the creator of the universe, and especially doubtful whether He could be made known to all, our Christ has accomplished this by His own power. For no one believed Socrates with such conviction as to be willing to die for his teaching, but Christ, who was known in part to Socrates—for He was and is the Logos who dwells in every man, and who through the prophets foretold things to come—was believed not only by philosophers and scholars but by the ignorant and artisans, in such a way that they cared nothing for honour and glory on the one hand, or fear of death on the other, because in Him the power of the ineffable Father is present and not only the art of human speech (x.). It was indeed the spectacle of the courageous suffering and dying of Christians which had convinced Justin himself, so he confesses, of the

truth of Christianity. Plato and the Stoics have no doubt said much that was excellent, and so have others who in virtue of partaking in the divine seed of reason (σπερματικῷ θείου λόγου) perceived that which had affinity with it, but in the most important questions they could not arrive at a consentient and certain conviction; the innate seed of reason only enabled them to see the essential things dimly; but there is a difference between the seed and copy of reason, which is only granted to us according to the measure of our receptivity, and the very thing itself, the possession and imitation of which depends on the gift of grace. Therefore all that has been excellently said by any, belongs to us Christians, who honour and love, next to God, the Logos who is derived from the unbegotten God, because He for our sakes became man, in order, by taking part in our sufferings, to bring us healing (xiii.). The Apology closes with the repetition of the plea that Christians should not be condemned unheard, but that, on the contrary, it should be recognised that their doctrine is far above all human philosophy, especially above the frivolous Epicurean philosophy, which nevertheless is officially tolerated (xiv. f.).

In these two Apologies Justin has defended Christianity before the Roman government and cultured heathen society; to defend it against Judaism is the purpose of a third apologetic work, the *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, which was written somewhat later than the first Apology, that is to say, probably within the sixth decade of the second century.

In the first, introductory, chapters Justin narrates

how he had become a Christian. The Jew expresses the opinion that he would have done better to remain in the school of Plato or some other philosopher rather than to have allowed himself to be deceived by the false teaching of the Christians, who profess to know God but do not keep His law (viii., x.). In reply to this, Justin explains: we Christians indeed believe in the same God as you Jews, but we do not set our hopes upon Moses and the Law which was given on Horeb for the Jews only, for this has been superseded by the eternal and final law which has been given to all men without distinction in Christ. We, who through the crucified Christ have been brought to God, are the true Israel. To this the prophets long ago pointed, as Justin shows from many passages of Isaiah and other prophets. And the prophets also foretold the unbelief and hatred of the Jews against Christ. The ritual law was given to the Jews only because of their hardness of heart, and that it is possible to please God apart from the Law is proved by all the righteous of the pre-Mosaic period. Even Abraham, according to the Scripture (Gen. xv. 6; *cf.* Rom. iv. 1 ff.), was justified by faith, and received circumcision, not as a means to righteousness but only as a sign, which, moreover, the Egyptians, Moabites, and Edomites also possessed, without its doing them any good. If, on the other hand, a Gentile has the true knowledge of Christ and God, and observes the eternal principles of right, he possesses the excellent and profitable circumcision, and is a friend of God, who takes pleasure in his gifts and offerings (xi.–xxix.). Then, turning to the offence caused to the Jews by the lowliness and death on the cross of Jesus the Messiah, Justin seeks to show from



Old Testament passages that both the earthly lowliness and the sufferings of Jesus and also His exaltation to heaven had been foretold; the Jews, however, fail to understand that, because they interpret these prophecies as referring to one or other of their kings. Even the appearance of false teachers among the Christians had been foretold, and therefore cannot be urged as an argument against the truth of the Church's faith. Justin closes this explanation with the statement, reminiscent of Paul (though he is not mentioned), that it is not the sons of Abraham after the flesh who become partakers of salvation, but only those who, after the pattern of Abraham's believing spirit, acknowledge Christ; but the Old Testament saints will be saved along with the Christians (xxx.-xlv.). In answer to the question raised by Trypho, whether a Jew who believed in Christianity but still continued to observe the Mosaic Law could be saved, Justin answers that, in his opinion, such an one could certainly be saved, provided that he did not seek to persuade Gentile Christians to observe the Mosaic Law, or deny that they could be saved without this. There were, indeed, he adds, some Church Christians who denied that Jewish Christians who thus cling to the Law could be saved, and refused to associate with them; he himself, however, does not agree with those who take up this attitude (xlvii.).

Trypho goes on to raise objections against the Church's doctrine of Christ's superhuman nature and origin, contrasting it with the Jewish expectation of a man begotten of men, and anointed by Elias, who should come again (xlix.). Justin appeals in the first place to the theophanies and angelophanies of the sacred history, in which the Angel of God appears as

a second God. Then he recalls analogous relations : as the spoken word goes forth from us without the Logos in us being thereby diminished, and as a fire is kindled from another without detriment to the first, so God begot out of Himself, as the First before all creatures, a reasonable Power (*δύναμιν τινα λογικὴν*) which is sometimes called the Glory of the Lord, sometimes Son, sometimes Wisdom, sometimes Angel, sometimes God, sometimes Lord and Logos, and once even the Captain of the Lord's Host, when it appeared in human form to Joshua the son of Nun. All these names are applied to it because it both serves the will of the Father and is begotten out of His nature by His will (lxi.). In support of this Justin appeals to the self-witness of "Wisdom," who is brought forth out of the Father of all things as Logos and Power and Glory, in Prov. viii. 21 f. ; further, to the saying in the creation story, "Let us make man," where the plural does not refer to the angels, but to the Son. The virgin-birth he supports by citing Isa. vii. 14, which Matthew also refers to this event. When Trypho refuses to be convinced by these arguments, but places the Christian story on the same level as those of the Greeks about the sons of Zeus, Justin replies that these heathen stories are, on the contrary, demonic perversions of the Old Testament predictions of the miraculous birth of Jesus. Not only for the deity and supernatural birth of Christ, but also for the crucifixion of Christ, Justin is able to bring forward a number of Old Testament predictions and prototypes, though of course in part by means of very bold allegorisation of the literal sense. Not as one accused, as the Jews hold, because of Deut. xxvii. 26, did Jesus die upon the

cross, but because, in accordance with His Father's will, He took upon Himself the curse that rested upon all, in order that He might heal the whole human race, but this does not do away with the guilt of the Jews in the death of Christ (xcv.). In the same way in which the disobedience which took its origin from the Serpent arose, in the same way must it be brought to an end. That is to say, as the still virgin Eve, seduced<sup>1</sup> by the word of the Serpent, gave birth to disobedience and death, so the Virgin Mary, in believing obedience to the word of the angel, bore Him through whom God destroyed the Serpent and the angels and men who were allied to him, bringing deliverance from death to believers (c.). The blood of the Passover lamb which in Egypt protected the houses of the Israelites from the destroying angel prefigured the blood of Christ which delivers believers from death, and so did also the red cord of Rahab the harlot, and the brazen serpent raised up by Moses in the wilderness. But the fact that the Jews do not understand these prophecies as referring to Christ comes from their not perceiving the art of the Holy Spirit, who often speaks of future things as though they were just about to happen, or had already happened; so it is, *e.g.*, in Isa. liii. and lv.; Jer. ii. 13, iii. 8; Zech. ii. 10 ff., iii. 1 f. So, too, the prediction in Mal. i. 11 that everywhere pure sacrifices shall be

<sup>1</sup> The wording, τὸν λόγον τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄφεις συλλαβοῦσα, seems almost to suggest an allusion to the Jewish legend of the sexual corruption of Eve by the Serpent-demon, *cf.* i. 287. Perhaps Justin thought of the seducing word of the Serpent to Eve as the medium of a demonic conception and incarnation, and in the case of Mary of the angel's word as the medium of the conception and incarnation of the Divine Logos.

offered to God, is not to be referred to the offering of prayer by the Jews in the Diaspora, which is not, in fact, found everywhere, but to the Christian sacrifice of the bread and cup of the Eucharist, which, according to the ordinance of Christ, is offered everywhere on earth. It is certainly true that prayers and thanksgivings worthily offered are the only perfect sacrifices well-pleasing to God, and Christians have learned to offer such, and they do it at this devotional act of eating and drinking, at which also they remember the suffering of the Son of God for their sakes (cxvii.). So, too, the prophecies in Isa. xlii. 6 ff., xlix. 6 ff., refer only to Christians, not to Jewish proselytes, who have not received an illumination nor a new covenant but are members of the old legal covenant.

To Christ are also to be referred all passages which speak of God as having descended or ascended anywhere, or gone to any place. For the ineffable Father and Lord of all things does not walk about, neither does He sleep or rise up, but remains ever in His own place, seeing and hearing clearly, but not with eyes and ears but with a power for which we have no name. He surveys all things and knows all things, and none of us remains hidden from Him. He does not move, and is not contained by any space, not even by the whole world, for He indeed was before the world came into being. How could He speak to anyone or appear in a particular corner of the earth, when it was impossible for the people at Sinai to look upon the glory even of His envoy? Therefore neither Abraham nor Isaac nor Jacob nor any other man ever saw the Father and Lord of all things, but His Son, who according to His will is both God, and angel, in that He carries out His decree,

who of old became fire when He spoke with Moses at the bush, and who as man was to be born of the Virgin. And this Son is not merely a power which goes forth from the Father for a season and returns to Him again; but, as He who was begotten by the Father before all creatures, He is a being numerically distinct (independent) from Him who begat Him (cxxvii. ff.). Finally, Justin urges the Jews to confession and repentance, to which end God has given all men freedom, and through which all, if they desire it, may by the Divine mercy receive forgiveness. But they and others who in this resemble them, deceive themselves when they say that even if they are sinners their sin is not reckoned to them, because they know God (cxli.). With this side-glance at the Gnostics, whose Determinism and Intellectualism must have been particularly distasteful to him as an apologist and missionary preacher of Christianity, Justin closes his *Dialogue with Trypho*.

## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXIV

#### THE CHARACTER OF JUSTIN'S APOLOGIES

IF we take a general view of the contents of these three Apologetic writings of Justin we must acknowledge that he admirably discharged the task laid upon him by his age. He not only repelled the attacks upon Christianity vigorously and with clear arguments, but he also succeeded in describing and defending the Christian faith, according to the average view of the Church of his time, in a way well calculated to appeal to the minds of heathen and Jewish readers. To ascribe to him a Jewish-Christian tendency is a scarcely intelligible error, in view of his severe censure of the Jewish people and religion, and the central significance which he attributes to faith in Christ as the Logos and Son of God. But the contemptuous fashion in which it has lately become customary—following in the footsteps of the Confessional critics of the sixteenth century, the “Centuriators”<sup>1</sup>—to judge “the Christianity of Justin,” seems to me to testify rather to the dogmatic

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the authors of the polemical Reformation work on Church history known as the *Magdeburg Centuries* (1559-1574).—TRANSLATOR.

prejudices than to the historical sense of the critics. The view that the Christianity of Justin consists solely in instruction and law, rests on a wholly superficial understanding of his doctrines of Christ and of salvation. Justin, no doubt, says in one place that even if Christ were regarded as merely an ordinary man, He would be worthy, because of His wisdom, to be called a son of God (I. xxii.). But it does not follow from this that, according to Justin, Christ *was* only a wise teacher; He is the manifestation in human form of the true pre-mundane Son of God, the first-born Logos, the reasonable power (*λογικὴ δύναμις*) which is begotten of God. And what exactly that means is particularly clear in Justin. The two aspects which, from the first—even before Philo, in the Stoic identification of Logos and Hermes—were combined in the Logos conception, that of the personal word of revelation and the Divine Intelligence, are both equally represented in Justin. In one aspect the Logos is the principle of the general mental capacity of men in general and of the special endowment of sages, poets, and prophets; again, as the personal Son, messenger, and servant of God, it is the subject of the incarnation in Jesus. The latter is therefore the revelation, in all its completeness and intensity, of the same Divine principle which received a partial manifestation in the wisdom and virtue of pre-Christian heroes, and of which the seminal power is innate in the human race generally (II. viii., x., xiii.). Since, then, the Person of Christ is thought of as the perfect manifestation of the same Divine principle which in earlier times was the ground and source of all that is true and good in humanity, the result is, on the one hand, to declare

Christianity as decidedly as possible to be the absolute religion in which all earlier religions are fulfilled and superseded; on the other, to accord at the same time to pre-Christian humanity, not only Jewish but heathen, its relative share in the true and the good. Christianity is no longer, as it appears on the theory of magical inspiration, a complete, exclusive antithesis to what is natural and human, but is related to the latter as the fulfilment to the preparation, as the fruit to the seed, as the whole to the parts. Justin's doctrine of the Logos carried with it the fruitful idea of a revelation which was not magical, catastrophic, breaking in from without, but inward, universal, and permanent, and thus the dualism between Christian and human, if not already overcome, was at least so modified and softened down that Christianity was recognised to be the legitimate possessor of all human truth and good, and thus the foundation was laid for its claim to become a world-religion. And this universalising and making-inward of revelation was at the same time a rationalising and ethicising of the primitive Christian enthusiasm, a transcending of its violently revolutionary tendencies, a subordination of its motive force to the rational order and rule of social life; in short, it rendered possible the existence of Christianity as an organised Church fellowship. It is not obvious how all this can be considered an obscuration or depotentiation of Christian truth. It is true that Justin shares with the Stoic philosophy his doctrine of the partaking of all men in the Divine Logos (I. xlvi., II. viii., x., xiii.) and directly borrowed therefrom his conception of the "seminal word" (*λόγος σπερματικός*). But this thought did not serve in his use of it to lower Christianity, or to put it on



the same footing with any philosophic system, but, on the contrary, to exalt Christianity as the perfect fulfilment of all human efforts after truth and virtue, setting it high above all the imperfect and one-sided phases of thought and life in earlier history and exhibiting it as the fulness of truth and grace revealed in Christ to all men, as the fulfilment of the purpose for which mankind was created. And this conception of Christianity has been held in common by the profoundest teachers, from John the Evangelist down to Schleiermacher. The Gospel of John likewise teaches that the Logos is "the light that lighteth every man," and that outside of, and prior to, Christianity there were men who were of the truth, of God, whose works were done in God, children of God, who had already belonged to the Father and therefore were also destined to belong to the Son. It is only a further development of this profound thought when Justin says of wise and virtuous heathens like Socrates and Heracleitus, that they, whom the world took to be atheists, were really Christians, because they lived in fellowship with the Logos (*μετὰ λόγου*, I. xlv.). But at the same time there remains always the distinction that Socrates and those like him only knew a part of Christ, a seed and image of the Logos, whereas we are enabled to know His whole nature and prototypal reality as it has appeared in Jesus Christ (II. i., x., xiii.). Justin's doctrine of Christianity as the fulfilment of the revelation which was present in the human mind from the beginning does not need to be defended on the ground that he was an apologist, and as such spoke in this way in order to accommodate his teaching to the heathen world; he was honestly and

completely in earnest<sup>1</sup> about it; he was conscious that, in holding this conviction, he was in complete harmony with the most enlightened teachers of the Church of his time; and all the teachers of the Greek (Eastern) Church continued to follow the path on which he had started; and indeed some other teachers, who took in the main a pessimistic view of human nature, on occasion reverted to his view, as when they spoke of the *anima naturaliter Christiana* (Tertullian), or said that Christianity was as old as the human race (Augustine).

Alongside of the Johannine view of Christianity as the fulfilment of the revelation of God in humanity we find in Justin also the Pauline thought of redemption in a form reminiscent of Rom. v. 12–21. There Adam's disobedience as the cause of the dominion of sin and death, is contrasted with Christ's obedience as the source of the righteousness and victory over death which cancels it; so Justin (*Dial. c.*) says that while Eve, seduced by the word of the serpent, gave birth to disobedience and death, Mary, in believing obedience to the word of the angel, bore Him through whom God destroyed the demons and wrought deliverance from death for believers. Christ's appearance therefore betokens the re-birth of mankind, the cancelling of their disobedience by obedience, and of their subjection to death and the devil by their deliverance from both. That the sufferings and death which Christ underwent for our sakes belong to His saving work, is often said by Justin, but without any more detailed explanation of the way in which this saving effect is to be thought of, so that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the excellent remarks of Aubé, *St Justin* (Paris, 1875, pp. 102 ff.).

it remains doubtful whether he adopted a theory of atonement in the Pauline sense, or whether he thought of the victory over the demons as effected by the ethical value of Christ's obedience. In any case he did not think of a satisfaction rendered to the Law; instead of that, here, as elsewhere in the Church of those days, there appears the victory over the evil spiritual powers which is alluded to in Col. ii. 15 and Heb. ii. 14, and strongly emphasised by John throughout. Since the demons are the personification of all religious and moral evil, their defeat by Christ signifies a deliverance in principle from ungodliness and unrighteousness—the same thing therefore which Paul describes as reconciliation and justification, and John as birth from above, or from the Spirit. What right, therefore, has anyone to assert that Justin did not know Christ as the Redeemer, but only as teacher and law-giver?

The appropriation of salvation also has for Justin the same two aspects as for Paul and John. It comes about as, on the one hand, a personal act of repentance<sup>1</sup> and faith, and on the other, through the sacramental rites practised by the Church as a community—baptism and the Lord's Supper. That repentance is thought of as a personal act of free-will is self-evident in the case of missionary and apologetic discourses, and it is so thought of throughout the whole of the apostolic discourses in the Acts of the Apostles; for in such cases the preacher necessarily exhorts his hearers to repent, and in so doing implies their freedom. Whether the varying success of this appeal in the case of different hearers does not, after

<sup>1</sup> The German *Sinnesänderung*, change of mind or attitude, is a closer rendering of *μετάνοια* than our "repentance."

all, rest upon a deeper background of predestination, is a separate question which the reflective theologian may put to himself, and which Paul and John have certainly answered in a determinist sense, whereas Justin strongly emphasises the indeterminate freedom of the will. But then, have not the opinions of Church teachers of all times, down even to the present day, varied on this difficult question and often contradicted one another? Why, therefore, should it be made a reproach against Justin, and considered a sign of the inferiority of his Christianity, that in face of Stoic fatalism and the Gnostic determinism of the Basilideans and Valentinians, he emphasised self-determination and individual responsibility as necessary to the beginning and progress of the Christian life?<sup>1</sup> The mystical side of the consciousness of salvation is not, however, entirely lacking to him, but it is still more definitely attached than in Paul and John to the mystic Church-rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism he describes as the laver of regeneration and illumination, by which the children of nature, necessity, sin, and ignorance are

<sup>1</sup> The connection of his doctrine of freedom with that of the innate Divine seminal reason is also to be noted. Inasmuch as this rests on a waking of the Divine Logos in men, the ethical exercise of the reason, or the freedom of man for good, comes finally to the same thing which is called in John (vi. 44 ff.) being begotten by God, or taught by God, on which the coming to Christ and to faith in Him depend. Freedom is the ethical manifestation of that which in the religious sphere is called the inner revelation of the Logos in the human soul. Understood thus, in connection with his whole theology, Justin's doctrine of freedom is quite in harmony with the Pauline and Johannine doctrine of the Divine causation of faith and love. Paul and John have also placed grace and freedom side by side, unmediated, as two aspects of truth having equal rights (Rom. ix. -xi. ; John vi. 44 ff., 65 ; cf. vii. 17).

changed into children of freedom and knowledge, and receive forgiveness of sins in the power of the name of the Father and the Saviour Jesus Christ the crucified and the Holy Spirit which is named over them (I. lxi.). It is clear that an inner spiritual influence upon the recipient, associated with the sacramental ceremony, is here implied; that is to say, the same kind of mystical connection between baptism with water and baptism with the Spirit as in Rom. vi. and John iii. 3 ff. In the Lord's Supper or "Eucharist" Justin sees (I. lxvi.) a mystical act of communion with the incarnate Jesus in which the incarnation of the Logos is in a sense continued, since the word of prayer which goes forth from Him makes the bodily food the medium of the same Divine Logos and Life-power which in Jesus took flesh and blood, and now in the believer, by this act of eating and drinking, is made the power of his own life, which is thereby exalted into a divine-human incorruptible life. That is the same conception which underlies all the sacred meals of the mystery-cults—Justin himself refers to the mysteries of Mithra,—that is to say, by partaking of a food which has been consecrated to the Saviour-God and is filled with his powers, the recipient enters into a mystical connection with him and appropriates his incorruptible divine life. That is why this mystical meal is called in the *Didache* a "pneumatic" food, that is to say, one filled with super-sensuous life-powers, and in Ignatius a "medicine of immortality." The same thought, however, is hinted at in 1 Cor. x. 16, and quite clearly developed in John vi. 51-58. Here again Justin is quite in harmony with the Church of his time, and we have no reason, as it

seems to me, to accuse him of superstition and the secularising of Christianity because the animistic conceptions associated with the heathen mysteries underlay the Sacramental doctrine which he shared with the Church of his time. The case is the same as with the mythical corruptions of incarnation and apotheosis which the Church similarly took over from the domain of heathen religion and made the vehicle of the content of its new faith. These mythico-mystic forms of faith and cultus were, so to speak, the accumulators in which the powerful and dangerous force of religious enthusiasm was stored up and restrained and made available as a safe motive-power for domestic use—for the service, that is, of the ethical life.

We will not here enter further into particulars, but will reserve them for the connected account, which is to be given later, of the Christian thinking of the apologists in general.

## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXV

#### TATIAN'S "DISCOURSE TO THE GREEKS"

TATIAN, an Assyrian by birth, had prepared himself by travels and studies for the rhetorical profession, but, becoming disgusted with the frivolousness of the rhetorical arts, he turned to Christianity and became at Rome a pupil of Justin. After the death of Justin he returned to his native land and joined the sect of the Encratites. His apologetic work, *Oratio ad Græcos*, was written during his Catholic period, between 160 and 170. Whereas Justin, even as a Christian, held Greek philosophy, especially the Platonic and Stoic philosophy, in high esteem, his pupil, a man of a different temperament, begins his discourse to the Greeks with an extremely contemptuous pronouncement upon the Greek philosophers. Instead of examining the intrinsic worth of their doctrines, he follows the method—only too often imitated in later Church polemics—of personal disparagement. He is not ashamed, in dealing with these great thinkers, instead of examining the content of their doctrines, to use against them the miserable gossip of the vulgar, who always take a delight in vilifying the great.

In his positive expositions of Christian beliefs there are some ideas peculiar to himself. He comes nearest to Justin in his doctrine of God and the Logos.

At the beginning, so he teaches in chapter v., God, the Lord of all things, existed alone; but inasmuch as He was the substance of all things, all things were with (σύν) Him—that is to say, potentially contained in Him; the Logos also, as the power of reason, was still in Him. Through His simple will, however (or through His will, out of His simplicity), the Logos arises, who, without departing into the void, becomes the first-born work of the Father. In Him we recognise the principle of the world. This forth-going of the Logos is not to be thought of as a division of the substance of the Father, but after the analogy of the forth-going of the spoken word from the thought of the thinker or the kindling of a new flame at a fire (*cf.* Just., *Dial.*, lxi., cxxviii.). The Logos who was begotten at the beginning then brought forth matter, which is therefore not without beginning and not of equal power with God, but is begotten by the Logos in the same way that the Logos is begotten by God.<sup>1</sup> And hence (because matter is begotten by the Logos) we believe in a resurrection of the body after the end of the world, not to enter on a new and aimless cycle, as in the theory of the Stoics, but with a view to the Judgment, which takes place once for all. The possibility of the bodily resurrection is not more difficult to conceive than that of our first coming into being. God, with His kingly power, will restore to its former

<sup>1</sup> The ὕλη is γεννητὴ, προβεβλημένη, the λόγος γεννηθεὶς ἀντεγέννησε τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς ποίησιν αὐτὸς ἑαυτῆ τὴν ὕλην δημιουργήσας.



condition, when He so wills, the substance (of our bodies), which is visible only to Him and is laid up in His secret storehouses. The ground of this hope lies in man's being in the image of God. "For the heavenly Logos, the Spirit who came forth out of the Father, the Logos who arose from the Reason (of the Father), has, in imitation of His Begetter, created man as the image of immortality, in order that, as incorruptibility belongs to God, so man also may receive a share in the Divine lot of immortality. But men, and before them the angels, were so created by the Logos that good is not, as it is with God, their natural characteristic, but is the object of their free choice. Now when men took the side of the first-born angel, who was more subtle than any, and made him, who was resisting the law of God, their God, both the originator of this impiety and his (human) adherents were shut out from intercourse with the potent Logos, and so man, although created in the image of God, became mortal, because the stronger Spirit departed from him. That first-born angel, however, because of his transgression and ignorance, became a demon, and the imitators of his delusive pretences became the demonic host, delivered over to the folly of which they had voluntarily been guilty." Then follows (viii. ff.) a description and condemnation of the heathen religions, which are traced back to the worship of demons and the astrological belief in fate.

In xiii. begins a further discussion of anthropological questions. The soul, so Tatian teaches, is not inherently immortal, but mortal. It is, however, capable of immortality. When it does not know the truth it dies and undergoes dissolution along with

the body; at the end of the world, however, it is raised again, and then receives death as a punishment, in immortality (in an endless duration of its painful condition of death). On the other hand, when it has assimilated the knowledge of God, it does not die even though it undergoes temporary dissolution. For in itself it has a tendency towards matter, and dies along with the flesh; if, however, it has attained to a connection with the Divine Spirit, it does not remain without help, but rises up to the higher regions to which the Spirit leads it, for His dwelling is above, while the origin of the soul is from below. For at the beginning, indeed, the Spirit lived with the soul, but when it would not obey Him, He deserted it once more. It retained only a spark (*ἔνασμα* = glow persisting under ashes) of His power, and since in its separation from Him it is not able to behold that which is perfect, in its seeking after God it has fallen into the error of polytheism. The Spirit of God does not dwell in all; but in individual men who led a righteous life, He united Himself with their souls and made known to other souls in prophecies that which is hidden. Those, then, who obeyed the voice of wisdom attracted to them the Spirit for which they had an affinity; the disobedient, on the other hand, who despised the servants of the suffering God (Christ), showed themselves to be opponents and not worshippers of God. So it is in the case of the Greeks, who are eloquent in speech but in their thoughts are absurd, because they have allowed themselves to be led away by the demons into idolatry. The important thing is henceforth to seek again that which is lost, to connect the soul with the Holy Spirit, and strive after union with

God. For man is not, as the chattering crows (the philosophers) assert, a rational being capable of receiving understanding and knowledge, but flesh, and his soul is only that which keeps the flesh together and is imprisoned in it, and is composed of various parts. Regarded in himself, if he does not become the dwelling of the God-sent Spirit, man is not like God, but like the beasts, from which he is only distinguished by the possession of articulate speech; only that man is God's image and likeness who raises himself above (purely natural) humanity to God and becomes the temple of His Spirit. God, who is perfect, has not flesh. The demons, though they have not indeed flesh, have spiritual bodies, like fire or air, and are copies of matter and of evil. Matter desired to bring souls under its dominion, and the demons by tempting men, who have freedom of choice, have delivered them over to the law of death. But, conquered as he is, the possibility has been given to him of conquering death again, by faith and penitence. If any desires to conquer the demons, he must cast off matter; for, armed with the panoply of the heavenly Spirit, he will then be able to save all that surrounds him. But heathen magic and divination, on the contrary, which are themselves in league with the demons, are foolish and wicked.

In chapter *xxi*. Tatian only touches on the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of God in order to contrast it with the analogous heathen stories. "Looking to your own traditions, you need not complain of us if we tell similar stories. And indeed what we relate is not foolish, but yours are idle tales." And they do not become more sensible even when the myths about the gods are allegorically interpreted

in the sense of the Stoic natural philosophy. However, it would profane the Christian faith to bring it into comparison with the heathen gods, who wallow in mire and filth. Then follows a satirical reference to the lewdness and cruelty of the Roman shows and games, and to the vain conduct of the cynic philosophers and the enmity between the various Schools. It was his acquaintance with all these follies and indecencies of the heathen which had made upon Tatian, as he tells us in chapter xxix., so repulsive an impression that he retired into himself, and sought how he might find the truth. When in so doing he was looking at everything that might be of importance, he met with certain writings of the barbarians which were older than the Greek dogmas and more divine than their errors. These convinced him, by the simplicity of their style, the absence of artifice in the writers, by the easily intelligible explanation of the creation of the world, the foreknowledge which they showed of the future, the excellence of their moral precepts, and their doctrine of one sole Authority (of God) ruling over the whole universe. Thus his soul was taught of God, and he perceived that all those former things (heathen knowledge and conduct) led only to damnation, whereas this (that which is revealed by God) abolished subjection to the world, delivered us from innumerable masters and tyrants, and restored to us what we had, indeed, long ago received but had not been able to preserve against the power of error. Being initiated into this knowledge, he desires henceforth to get rid of these childish follies. For the heathen taunts at the faith and morals of the Christians he pays them back in their own coin ;

indeed, he offers to prove to the Greeks that our philosophy, derived from Moses, is older than the doctrines of the Greeks, older even than the discovery of the alphabet (lxxi.). How far the literary and historical erudition which Tatian summons up for this purpose impressed his contemporaries may be left an open question. More convincing than this argument was, in any case, the moral earnestness with which Tatian censured the degenerate heathen society of the time, fast sinking into a morass of sensuality, and set over against it the unpretentious simplicity of the Biblical faith and the moral purity of Christianity as the truth which would free the world from slavery. As a Christian cynic he called men back from the unnaturalness of their godless and immoral over-civilisation to the simplicity, purity, and freedom of nature, as it was originally created by God and has been restored by the God-man—an Early-Christian forerunner of modern anti-social reformers of the type of Rousseau and Tolstoy.

## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXVI

#### ATHENAGORAS' "PETITION ON BEHALF OF THE CHRISTIANS"

NOTHING certain is known about the personality of Athenagoras. Whether he was an Athenian philosopher (as the superscription, due to a later hand, asserts) or, according to another tradition, was the principal teacher and president of the catechetical school at Alexandria, must be left an open question. Two writings of his have come down to us, the "Petition (*προσβεβα*, *Supplicatio*) on behalf of the Christians," addressed to the two Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, probably of about the year 177 A.D., and the theological essay "On the Resurrection of the Dead," the genuineness of which has been questioned by many (in spite of the allusion to it in *Suppl.* xxxvi.). We are here specially concerned with the former, the apologetic treatise, which is distinguished by the philosophical method of its apologetic.

After an introduction (i.-iii.) urging the application of the principles of justice, which are elsewhere universally respected, to the treatment of Christians by the state, Athenagoras begins (iv.) by refuting

the charge of atheism. Christians are not atheists, but acknowledge one God as Creator of all things, who is eternal, without beginning, distinct from corruptible matter which has had a beginning, who has made all things by His word. Similar things have been asserted hypothetically by the Greek poets and philosophers (Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoa) in virtue of the affinity of their souls with the Divine afflatus, so far as they were able to recognise the Divine by themselves—that is, of course, imperfectly and without agreement among themselves, whereas the Christian belief in God does not rest upon human theories but is supported by the testimony of the Spirit of God, who moved the tongues of the prophets like musical instruments. Nevertheless Athenagoras endeavours to find, in addition to the prophetic revelation, a rational argument for the unity of God in the unity of the world-order (viii.). Then he goes on to speak of the Trinitarian doctrine of God. Christians, too, recognise a Son of God, but not in the sense in which poets narrate fables about the sons of gods; the Son of God is the Logos of the Father in idea and effective power (*ἐν ιδεαί καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ*), for after Him (as the pattern), and through Him, all things have come to be, while the Father and the Son are one, the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son, in virtue of the unity and power of the Spirit (as the Divine Nature which is common to both). The Son is that which the Father first begot, not as something that has come into being—for from the beginning God, as the eternal and ever rational Spirit, had the Logos in Himself—but in the sense that He proceeded forth as idea and effective power to the formation of the formless

matter of the world, as is testified by the prophetic Spirit in Prov. viii. 22. But this same Holy Spirit, who worked in the prophets, we call an effluence of God, which, like a ray of the sun, goes forth from Him and returns to Him again. "Who should not then be astonished when he hears those men called atheists who speak of a God the Father and God the Son and Holy Ghost, and who show both that their essence is in the unity (*ἐν τῇ ἐνώσει δύναμιν*) and their distinction in the order (*ἐν τῇ τάξει διαίρεσιν*)? And that is not the whole of our teaching about God, for we speak also of a multitude of angels and ministering spirits whom God, the Creator and Moulder of the world, has distributed and appointed to rule over the elements, the heaven and the world, and to keep in due order all that is therein" (x.).

How thoroughly in earnest Christians are in this belief, they show, not by their words but by their deeds. "Would we, if we did not believe that God ruled the world, keep ourselves so pure? Surely not. But since we believe that we shall have to give account to God who has created both us and the world, of all our life here below, we choose to walk in temperance, philanthropy, and lowliness, convinced that here no evil can befall us, even though men take our lives, which could be compared with the reward which we shall receive from the great Judge for a meek, kind, upright life. How can anyone consider men to be irreligious who hold the present life of little value and have as their lode-star the knowledge of God and His Logos, the knowledge of the unity of the Son with the Father, of the fellowship of the Father with the Son, of the nature of the Spirit, of the union and distinction in unity of



the Spirit, the Son, and the Father; men, finally, who know a future life, glorious beyond all description, which is prepared for those who keep themselves pure from all wrong, and who go so far in the love of men that they do not love only their friends—we, then, who lead such a life as this; that we may escape the judgment, how can we be held by anyone to be irreligious?" (xii.)

The transcendence and freedom of God in relation to the world are expressly emphasised by Athenagoras, and in his argument he makes skilful use of philosophical doctrines. In chapter xvi. he writes: "The world was not created because God had need of it, for God is all things to Himself—inaccessible light, perfect world, spirit, power, reason. If the world is, as Plato says, a Divine work of art, I go, admiring its beauty, to the Artist; or if it is, as the Peripatetics say, His nature and body, we will not neglect the worship of the God who moves this body, or fall into the worship of the poor and weak elements (*cf.* Gal. iv. 9) of—as they say—passible matter and impassible air; or if it is held (with the Stoa) that the parts of the world are powers of God, we do not stop at the powers, but worship their Creator and Lord. I do not demand of matter what it does not possess, and do not pass by God to worship the elements (*i.e.* heavenly bodies), which can do no more than what has been committed to them; for even if by the art of the Creator they are fair to look upon, they nevertheless essentially share the nature of matter. And this, indeed, is said by Plato; that which men call heaven and earth has received from the Father much that is glorious, but it nevertheless partakes of a body, and therefore cannot be immutable. If, therefore, I admire

the heaven and the world-body because of the art that is in them, but do not pray to them as gods, because I know that they are subject to the law of corruption, why should I call those [idols] gods which I know to be made by men?" The origin of heathen idolatry is explained by Athenagoras partly from the deception of men by the demons, whom he holds, on the basis of Gen. vi. 2, to be fallen angels, partly (with Euhemerus) from the deification of dead men, partly from the imaginations of souls under the dominion of sense and having no knowledge of the truth (xxvi. ff.)

From xxxi. onwards Athenagoras addresses himself to the refutation of the calumnious charges brought against the morality of the Christians. Since for Christians even an impure thought is counted a sin before the all-knowing God, how can they be suspected of practising those shameful things the very thought of which is abhorrent to them? So far from that, they hold it only permissible to marry once, and that only with the purpose of rearing children; a second marriage, whether after voluntary separation or after the death of one of the parties, they hold to be only a less gross form of adultery. Many also remain continent and unmarried throughout their lives, in the hope of being the more firmly united to God (xxxiii.). Finally, as regards the accusation of eating human flesh (of "Thyestian banquets"), the Apologist points out how absurd such accusations are in the case of Christians, who cannot even endure the sight of murders (at the combats of gladiators and beasts), not to speak of committing them. Such shameful crimes might be committed by men who think that death ends every-

thing and that there is no resurrection or judgment, but not Christians, who are convinced that nothing is hidden from God's judgment and that the body will be punished along with the soul whose irrational desires it has obeyed. Even if the belief in the resurrection of the body should be held to be an idle tale, Christians might at worst be held guilty of credulity but not of wickedness, since what is thought their self-deception does no one any harm. That, moreover, the belief in the resurrection of the body is not irrational, and has the opinion of certain philosophers in its favour, the author promises to prove in a separate treatise (xxxvi.).

In this treatise, "On the Resurrection," Athenagoras first proves its possibility. The same Divine power which wondrously brings man into existence can also restore him to life. Then he shows its necessity. Man as the rational being was created for an end of absolute value, namely, for wisdom and the knowledge of God; this purpose of the Creator also guarantees his eternal continuance, and this, in turn, his resurrection, without which man could not continue to exist (xiii.). But the resurrection is also a moral postulate. For the Divine righteousness must display itself in retributive justice; but that is often absent in the present life, where the wicked go unpunished and the righteous unrewarded. Therefore the judgment must take place in the future life, and it must include both soul and body, since both have an equal share in the good and evil that man does; therefore the body must be reconstituted, in order that in the new state the whole man may receive reward or punishment for his life in the present world. The resurrection is therefore the

necessary presupposition for the realisation of that end of absolute value for which human nature was made (xix.-xxv.). The philosophic apologist has deliberately avoided having recourse to the resurrection of Christ.

## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXVII

#### THEOPHILUS *AD AUTOLYCUM*

THEOPHILUS, according to Eusebius (*H.E.*, IV. xx.) fourth bishop of Antioch (169–177), addressed to his friend Autolytus three books in defence of the Christian faith, probably soon after the death of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, 180 A.D. In philosophic culture he is much inferior to Athenagoras. His statements about the Greek philosophers show little knowledge; as, for example, in iii. 5 ff., where he asserts of Zeno and Diogenes that they teach cannibalism, and incite men to murder and devour their parents, and of Epicurus that he inculcates the practice of incest with mothers and sisters; or when he asserts that Plato makes the gods consist of matter, and of his psychology mentions only the doctrine of transmigration. He compares the various cosmological myths and philosophical explanations of the world, and concludes from their manifold contradictions that they are all absurd fables and inventions, and that only Moses and the prophets have revealed the truth about God and the creation, and also about the history of the world and its future end. Yet he also gives at the beginning of his work

a rhetorically-phrased disquisition on the possibility of knowing God from His revelation in nature, which, however, only the pure soul, purified by faith and the fear of God, is capable of perceiving (i. 2-7). The Christianity of Theophilus consists in belief in the one God, the Creator and Ruler and Judge of the world, whose glory, greatness, power, wisdom, goodness, and benevolence are incomprehensible, and incomparable and unapproachable, but of whom we know that He is kind and merciful towards those who love and fear Him, an educator of the good and father of the righteous, but an angry judge and punisher of the wicked (i. 3), whose judgment will be executed in the world to come on those who have risen from the dead. That is the theistic religion of morality, for which the way has been prepared by the Hellenistic popular philosophy, which, when based upon the authority of the Old Testament word of God—freed from its national Jewish limitations,—was the religion most easily understood by the average member of the Church of those days. Remarkably little prominence is given to what is specifically Christian, but it does not entirely disappear; it is, so to speak, drawn together and concentrated in the form of the Trinitarian doctrine of God, which, in Theophilus also, is expressed very much in the same formulas which had been usual since the time of Justin. In ii. 10 he says: God, though He is Himself free from all needs, willed to create man, in order to make Himself known to him, and therefore He prepared the world for him. “God, having the Logos dwelling within Him, in His most inward parts, begot Him, bringing Him forth together with His Wisdom before the

universe.<sup>1</sup> This Logos He had as a helper in His creation; He is called the principle (*ἀρχή*) because he rules over everything that is created by Him. He then, who is God's Spirit, and Principle, and Wisdom and the Power of the Highest, came down into the prophets and spoke through them about the creation of the world and everything else. For the prophets were not yet, when the world came into being, but the Wisdom of God already was, which is in Him, and His holy Logos, who is ever with Him." The only point that remains obscure here is the relation of the Wisdom to the Logos. Are both the same, or are they two hypostases who go forth from the inner being of God to an existence of their own? In favour of the latter view we have the later passage in ii. 15, where the first three days of creation are described as types of the Trinity—of God, and of His Logos, and of His Wisdom. The last-named obviously takes here the same position in the Trinity which is elsewhere allotted to the Spirit; and in ii. 18 and i. 7 also Wisdom is named alongside of the Logos as the mediating principle in the creation. On the other hand, it is said again in ii. 22 (as in ii. 10, middle) that the Logos Himself is "the Power and Wisdom

<sup>1</sup> Ἐχων ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις σπλάγγχνοις ἐγγένησεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἐξερευζάμενος (cf. Ps. xlv. 1 in LXX., ἐξηρεύετο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν). It is doubtful whether the words μετὰ τ. ἐ. σοφίας mean "together with, at the same time with, His wisdom," so that Wisdom is to be thought of as a Being begotten by God (*γέννημα αὐτοῦ*, i. 3), or, "with the help of, in fellowship with, His wisdom," so that Wisdom takes part in the act of production, and the Logos therefore is the son of the Divine syzygy, Father and Wisdom. But in view of the other passages quoted above, the former is the more probable interpretation.

of God." As such he appeared "in the rôle of God" (*ἐν προσώτῳ τ. θεοῦ*) in Paradise and communed with Adam, for when it is said in Genesis that Adam heard the voice of God, this "voice" means nothing else than the Logos of God, who is also His Son. But He is "Son," not in the same sense as the sons of the gods in the poetic myths, who arose from sexual generation, for, according to the doctrine of truth, the Logos dwelt from everlasting in the heart of God (*ἐνδιάθετος*). For before anything was made He had Him as His counsellor, because He was His understanding and knowledge. But when God willed to create all that He had determined upon, He begot this Logos as one brought forth (*προφορικόν*), as the first-born of all creation, without Himself being emptied of the Logos; but having begotten the Logos, He remained ever in communion with Him (*ὁμιλῶν*). Then follows a quotation from John i. 1 ff. Just because of this His Divine nature and origin, the Logos can appear in the rôle of God the Father and as His envoy wherever God the Father wills, and become the object of human sight and hearing, as in the case of our first parents in Paradise. According to this, the forth-going Logos is related to the inner Divine Logos as the revelation of God appearing in spatial and temporal existence, or the manifestation of God within the world (immanent) is related to His supra-mundane, timeless, and spaceless (transcendent) being, in Himself and for Himself. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity was therefore the synthesis of the supra-mundane God of the Semitic theocracy and the immanent God of the Indo-Germanic theanthropy; it was an achievement of religious speculation, the great significance of which



has been brought into clear light by the science of comparative religion. And the fact that the Logos-doctrine is not yet in these earlier Fathers so closely and exclusively bound up with the historical Person of Jesus as in later Church dogmatics, is not a disadvantage, but rather an advantage, of the earlier teaching. For in it the kernel and abiding truth of the Christian doctrine of "God-Manhood," the universal revelation of God within man, or the partaking of humanity in general in the Divine Logos, is more clearly to be recognised than under the mythical husk of the Church dogma of the sole God-Man Jesus Christ. But this is not to deny that this husk was indispensable as a form in which the Church might clothe that cardinal doctrine of Christianity.

## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXVIII

#### THE "OCTAVIUS" OF MINUCIUS FELIX

MARCUS MINUCIUS FELIX, a Roman Christian and a widely cultured lawyer, wrote—probably under Antoninus Pius, between 150 and 160<sup>1</sup>—an apology for Christianity, distinguished by its taste and spirit, as well as by the warmth of its religious conviction, in the form of a disputation between the heathen Cæcilius and his Christian friend Octavius. The opening chapters describe in an agreeable gossiping fashion the scene and occasion of the colloquy. Then the heathen Cæcilius opens the discussion, and includes in his discourse (v.–xiii.) all the prejudices and accusations against Christianity which were then prevalent in the Roman world. These are then (xvi.–xxxviii.) very eloquently refuted by Octavius, point by point. Cæcilius finally declares himself

<sup>1</sup> To this date points the reference to the rhetorician Fronto, who had written against the Christians about 150. But whether in xiv. 1 the *homo Plautinæ prosapiæ* is Fronto, as Schanz conjectured (*Rhein. Mus.*, 1895), is, it must be said, not certain. A passage in xviii. 5 must, however, have been written before 161, since the argument for monarchy there used would have been out of place under the *condominium* of Marcus Aurelius and Verus.

conquered and converted, and all three<sup>1</sup> friends express their joy at finding themselves in agreement in their conviction (xxxix. f.).

The sceptical heathen first expresses his astonishment that the Christians, as unlearned men, think it possible that they should have certain knowledge in regard to the difficult questions about which philosophers are still uncertain. The wise man is content to know himself, and leaves everything beyond an open question. Who can tell whether there is a Providence, or whether only blind chance and fate rule everywhere, since experience certainly shows that misfortune befalls the good not less than the bad?—indeed, the latter often have a complete triumph over the former. In this uncertainty of all things it is best to hold by the traditional faith of our fathers and to worship the gods according to prescriptive usage without bothering ourselves about their nature. This is the way in which the nations have always worshipped their native gods, and Rome has become great by adopting the gods of the conquered peoples along with her own. The whole of Roman history proves the value of this practical form of religion; and even at the present time its usefulness is shown in warning and consoling oracles and dreams. Only an impious presumption would dare to think of overthrowing this religion, established as it is by its age and its salutary effects. But what was formerly only ventured on by individual free-thinkers, a miserable rabble of Christians now presumes to undertake—people drawn from the dregs of the populace and credulous women,

<sup>1</sup> The third is the author, who is present at the discussion.—

a race that shuns the light, babbles in corners, and is silent in public. They abhor the temples as though they were charnel-houses, heap contempt upon the gods, mock at the ceremonies of worship; pity, forsooth—while they themselves need pity—the priests; look down upon honours and the purple, while they themselves go about half-naked; nay, in their incredible folly and insolence, they despise present torments and fear uncertain future ones, and the death which comes after death, not death itself, the fear of which is charmed away for them by the delusive hope of coming to life again. The corrupt morals, the loathsome sanctuaries (*sacraria teterrima*), of this abandoned sect are now spreading throughout the whole world. They know each other by secret marks and signs, and love each other almost before they know each other personally. They call each other brothers and sisters, and practise unchaste rites under the cover of the sacred name. Were there not some basis for it, keen-scented rumour would not relate such horrible things of them—things hardly to be mentioned with decency. I hear that, from some senseless delusion, they worship as something sacred the head of that most miserable of beasts, the ass—a custom thoroughly worthy of such a religion! Others say that they adore the sexual parts of their president and priest as the nature of their Begetter; that may perhaps be a false suspicion, but it is at least in accordance with their secret and nocturnal celebrations. And when rumour names, among the objects of their worship, a man who, because of his crimes, suffered the heaviest of death-penalties, and the odious gibbet, it ascribes to these madmen appropriate objects of devotion, in that they worship

what they themselves deserve. As horrible as it is well-known is the report about the devoting of newborn children—how they stab the child which is hidden under sacrificial flour, drink its blood, divide its members among them, and by this sacrifice seal their confederacy, binding themselves to silence by the consciousness of their common crime. And it is a matter of common knowledge what goes on at their (sacred) meals. How, after stimulating their lusts by excess at the table, the lights are extinguished, and in the shameless darkness men and women unite in lustful embraces, as chance mingles them, not shunning even incest. That all this, or at any rate most of it, is true, is shown by the secrecy of this mischievous religion. Else why do they take such pains to keep their cult secret, for surely that which is honourable always loves to be known openly, and only crime hides itself. Why do they have no altars, no temples, no known images, never speak in public, or hold free assemblies? Why else, except that their cult is worthy of punishment and reprobation? But who, whence, or where is the sole, solitary God whom no free nation and kingdom, not even Roman superstition, knows? Only the miserable race of the Jews resembles them in having one sole God, but they at least worshipped Him openly, with temples, altars, sacrifices, and ceremonies; and so wholly without power is He, that He, along with all His people, became the prisoners of the Roman divinities. But what monstrosities the Christians have been the first to invent—their God whom they cannot see or show, is supposed to examine exactly all action and speech and even the hidden thoughts, to run everywhere and be present everywhere, to be present with

intrusive curiosity at all actions, to wander through all places, so that he can neither look after particulars because He is occupied with the whole, nor suffice to the whole because He is taken up with particulars. Further, they say that burning and destruction awaits the earth, nay, the whole world, with the stars, as if the eternal order of nature, resting upon Divine laws, could be disturbed, the bond that holds the elements together be torn asunder, and the heavenly frame of the universe collapse in ruins! What double delusion! To announce the destruction of the heavens and the stars, and to promise themselves, beings that are born and perish, an eternal life after death! To themselves, as the good, they promise eternal life, and to all others, as wicked, eternal punishment! And yet it has already been shown that they themselves are the wicked ones. But even assuming they were just, yet, according to the Christian view, guilt and innocence is to be ascribed to fate; for men do not come to this sect of their own free will, but as elect, therefore it would be an unjust judge who should punish man for his fate and not for his will. Again, the question suggests itself whether men will rise again with or without the body, and whether with the old one or a new one? In the latter case a new man would have come into being, instead of the old one's having been reconstituted. All this is nothing but brain-sick imaginations, empty consolations offered by delusive poets in a sweet song, and by credulous persons shamefully perverted to refer to the God of the Christians. How deceptive these promises of a future life are, Christians can discover from the experiences of the present life. For while they for

the most part suffer all kinds of hardship, their God looks idly on, and cannot, or will not, help them, so weak or so unjust is He. Death and torture, cross and fire, threaten them; where is that God who can help men when they have come to life again, but not those who are now living? The Romans rule without the God of the Christians, possess the whole world, and are lords over the Christians. The latter, on the other hand, live in anxiety and dread, refrain from reputable pleasures, attend no spectacles at the theatre, no processions, no public banquets, no sacred games, eschew, from fear of those gods, whose existence they deny, food and drink of which a portion has been offered at an altar, refuse to crown their heads with garlands, and reserve sweet unguents for the dead; thus these pale, timorous, pitiable men have as little life in the present as in the future. They had surely done better, if philosophy is their foible, to hold with Socrates, the prince of the wise, who, in reply to a question about heavenly things, answered, "What is above us, does not concern us." Doubtful things should be left undecided, and on matters about which so many great men are in uncertainty, one should not rashly hasten to a conclusion, lest one should either fall into old wives' superstitions or destroy all religion.

So far the heathen Cæcilius. Octavius begins his reply by remarking that the view here offered is self-contradictory, and oscillates between faith in the gods and doubt of them. That is no wonder, for the speaker has no firm conviction about the true. But he should not be incensed that among the Christians even unlearned and poor people discuss heavenly matters, for, after all, a mind to wisdom is a general

human endowment, not restricted to wealth and study. And it is not the authority of the speaker that counts, but the truth of his discourse, and this may be the more rational the worse its form is, for then it will not blind the eyes by splendour of rhetoric, but draw its support from its conformity to what is true (xvi.). Then the Apologist begins with an argument for the monotheistic doctrine of God. The heaven above us and the earth about us testify that there is a God of perfect understanding, by whom the whole of nature is animated, moved, and ruled. The unity of the world-order points to the unity of God, the producer of all things, who is without beginning or end, who orders all things by His understanding, brings all things to pass by His power, whose infinite greatness is beyond the comprehension not only of our senses, but of our understanding, whose nature cannot be worthily designated by any name. With this almost all philosophers of repute are so fully in agreement that we must either hold the Christians to be the philosophers of the present, or the philosophers to be the Christians of the past. The popular polytheism, on the contrary, consists of fables, based originally on veneration for men of outstanding greatness, and these fables have received through the poetic and plastic arts their seductive and morally pernicious charm. But in the oracles and auspices demons and unclean spirits are at work, and they stir up hatred against the Christians, at whose conjuration their power leaves them.

Then the Apologist addresses himself (xxviii.) to the refutation of the accusations brought against Christians, by showing that it is precisely the follies



and horrors of the heathen stories and customs which are groundlessly laid to the charge of Christians. In the heathen religion animals are worshipped (Apis) and men deified (Emperor-worship), obscenities are publicly practised, and every kind of shamelessness passes for culture (*impudicitia vocatur urbanitas*). A Saturn swallows his children, and, appropriately, in Africa children are sacrificed to him; nay, even the Roman Jupiter Latiaris is still constantly glutted with human blood. "But we Christians may neither see nor hear a murder, and we are so far from shedding human blood that we are even unwilling to use the blood of animals in food." Incest is represented by the heathen as practised by their gods, and they themselves do the like, "but we Christians are modest not only outwardly but in our hearts. We either do not marry at all, or only once, and for the sake of rearing children; at our feasts everything is orderly and temperate; merriment is restrained by dignity; pure is the speech, pure the body; many rejoice, without boasting of it, in their perpetual virginity; so far we are from taking pleasure in criminal lust that many of us blush at the idea of honourable marriage. We do not belong to the dregs of the populace, even if we do despise your marks of honour and your purple; we do not form a conspiracy, even if we do unite in a good and friendly spirit; we are no hole-and-corner whisperers, even if people refuse to hear us publicly. And that our numbers are growing daily is not a crime proving our error, but a witness to our credit. We do not recognise one another, as you suppose, by some outward mark, but by the sign of innocence and virtue. We mutually love one another, because we

are incapable of hatred; we call each other brethren as being children of the same God and Father, as comrades in faith and fellow-heirs of hope. . . . But do you think that we are concealing what we worship because we have no temples and altars? What image could I invent for God, seeing that, rightly understood, man himself is the image of God? What temple could I build for Him, seeing that this whole world which is created by Him is not able to contain Him? Is it not better to worship Him in our spirit, to dedicate our breast as His temple? Should I bring as an offering to God what He has created only for my use—ungratefully cast back His gift in His face? Surely the right offering is a good purpose, a clean heart, and a pure conscience. To be innocent and upright, to shun deceit, to deliver men from trouble, these are the right prayers, expiations, and offerings; this is our service to God. With us, the more righteous a man is, the more pious he is counted. It is quite true that we cannot show or see the God whom we worship, but we believe all the more firmly in God, because we can only feel Him and not see Him. In His works, in all that happens in the world, we see His ever-present power. You cannot look at the sun; how could you bear to look upon its Creator, the source of its light? You want to see Him with the bodily eye, and yet you cannot either see or understand your own soul, by which you live and speak.<sup>1</sup> But, you think, God knows not man's doings; He sits in heaven and cannot visit and know all. You are mistaken! How could He be far from us, seeing that all things

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the same thought in Marcus Aurelius, εἰς ἑαυτόν (the *Meditations*), XII. xvii.

in heaven and earth are brought to pass by Him and known by Him, since He is everywhere, not only close beside us, but immanent within us? Nothing can be hidden from Him; He is present in the darkness, and also in that other darkness of our thoughts. And we do not act only under His eye but in fellowship with Him; we live in His bosom. It did not profit the Jews to worship the one God with altars and temples in a very superstitious way. For it was only so long as they worshipped our God—for He is God of all—in pure piety and obeyed His beneficent commandments, that they grew in numbers and strength; afterwards by their evil conduct they brought their fate upon them. Because they abandoned Him they were abandoned by Him, and were not indeed taken prisoners along with their God, but were delivered over by Him to punishment."

As regards the Christian doctrine of the end of the world by fire, the philosophers (Stoics, Epicureans, Plato) agree with the Christians in this; not that we have followed their footsteps, but that they, from the predictions of the prophets, have found by imitation a shadow of the truth. Why should not man (in the resurrection) be reconstituted by God as he was first created by Him? Even Nature gives us confirmatory hints of our future resurrection. As Nature every spring awakes to new life, so we may expect a spring-time of resurrection for our bodies. Retribution and reward in the future world are made known to us also by the books of sages and the songs of the poets. And that those who know nothing of God are justly punished as ungodly and unrighteous, can only be doubted by a profane person; for not to

know the Creator and Lord of all things is as impious as to blaspheme Him. Neither should a man console or excuse himself by the idea of "fate." For the spirit of man is free, and therefore he will be judged after his death. Fate is nothing else than the lot which God, who can foresee what comes to pass, appoints according to the deserts of individuals. As concerns the condition of Christians in this earthly life, "our poverty is not our shame but our glory; we go our way through the world the more happily the less we have to sigh under the burden of riches. Even bodily ills are not a punishment to us, but a school of virtue, for valour is strengthened by suffering—have not all your valiant men whom you glory in as examples become famous through their hardships? It is therefore not the case that God is unable or unwilling to help us; He is indeed the Ruler of all things and the Friend of His people! But by sufferings and dangers, even unto death, He tests each man's character and will, certain that He can lose none of His own. What a fair spectacle it is for God when a Christian contends with suffering, measures his strength against threatenings, tortures, and death; when he maintains his freedom even in the presence of kings and princes and is submissive only towards God, his Lord; when he victoriously triumphs over those who condemn him! For he conquers who remains faithful to his conviction. No soldier receives a reward unless he has been proved amid dangers. And the warrior of God will not be deserted in his sufferings, nor perish in his death. So a Christian may seem, indeed, to be miserable, but can never be really miserable. The equals of your heroes, nay, superior to them, are our voluntary

sufferers—not men only, but also boys and weak women, who, with a God-inspired fortitude, mock at all torments. Do you not understand that no one is willing to suffer such things without good reason, and no one is able without God? Be not deceived by the riches, might, and power of the wicked; they will only fall the deeper the higher they are exalted. Without a knowledge of God there is no abiding happiness, for death draws near and happiness fades like a dream before one has grasped it. . . . We therefore with good reason shun your evil pleasures, your processions and shows, the connection of which with (heathen) religion we know and the pernicious attraction of which we condemn. The remains of sacrificial meals, too, we reject, not from fear, but in order to maintain our freedom, that it may not seem as though we gave allegiance to the demons or were ashamed of our own religion. We do not crown our heads with garlands, but we rejoice in the colour and smell of flowers. We do not give our dead fading garlands, but we have from God an unfading garland in the hope of future blessedness. Thus we already even here live blessedly in the hope of the future blessing of the resurrection. In short, we do not, like the philosophers, make a show of wisdom in our outward bearing, in the sight of men, but we have it in our hearts. We do not speak great words, but live greatly; we glory in possessing what they have sought with the greatest zeal and have not found. Ought we not to be grateful that the truth of that which is divine has come to ripeness in our time? Let us enjoy our good, and set our minds on that which is right. Let superstition be put away, let

wickedness be atoned for, let true religion be maintained!"

Who has a right to call in question the Christian spirit of this eloquent defender of Christianity? Have those who find it wanting because for the Roman lawyer the dogmatic side of Christianity was less prominent than the ethical?<sup>1</sup> It is quite true that the Christianity of Minucius Felix has the closest affinity with the Stoic Idealism, but it is hard to understand why this should be made a reproach against him, seeing that there are many points of contact even between Pauline Christianity and the Stoicism of Seneca. Moreover, a comparison of our Roman apologist with the Stoicism of a Seneca enables us to recognise that the ethical idealism of this philosophic system was partly confirmed by the Christian incentive of the belief in resurrection and reward, partly softened and elevated by the sentiment of humble brotherly love, in which we recognise the abiding influence of the loving spirit of Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> Moreover, his purpose of winning cultured Romans to Christianity prescribed the relegating of dogmatic questions to the background and the appeal to analogous doctrines of philosophy. Cf. Bönig on Minucius Felix, a Königsberg thesis of 1897.

## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXIX

#### TERTULLIAN'S *APOLOGETICUS*

THIS work has so many points of contact in thought and phrase with the "Octavius" of Minucius Felix that a direct dependence of one on the other must be assumed. But on which side the dependence lies has been much debated. For me the priority of the "Octavius" is established, not only because I hold it probable that it was composed between 150 and 160 (*vide sup.*, p. 458), but also from internal evidence. If we compare the excellently arranged Apology of Minucius Felix, which refutes the opponent point by point, and everywhere shows a delicate adjustment of thought and phrase, with the confused bombast, the sophisms, exaggerations, and invectives of the Carthaginian rhetorician, it is certainly much more probable that the latter expanded and coarsened the thoughts of Minucius Felix in his own fashion, than that this writer composed his harmonious work of art out of the gaudy rhetorical patchwork of Tertullian. It also seems to me more likely that the reference to christological dogma which is wanting in Minucius Felix has been added by the later Apologist, rather than that it should

have been deliberately omitted in the third century. These general arguments seem to me convincing, whereas an argument for the dependence of Tertullian based on particular passages will always be more or less open to attack.<sup>1</sup>

In the introductory chapters Tertullian claims that Christians should not be condemned unheard, but treated according to the principles of universal justice. He points out the inconsistency of the rescript of Trajan, according to which Christians were not to be sought out, but if they were accused were to be condemned, and also to the inconsistency of the popular judgment, which recognised the beneficial moral influence of the Christian faith, but nevertheless hated it. If it is said that Christianity is in contradiction with the ancestral laws and institutions of the Romans, Tertullian points out that the Romans have already altered many ancient laws, and that their present customs are widely different from those of their early ancestors. Then he refers with witty irony to the heathen rumours of the unchaste orgies and Thyestean banquets (child-murder) of the Christians, and retorts the accusation upon the heathen, who not only poetically glorify things of that kind in their myths, but also in reality still practise many things of a similar kind. As regards the accusation of sacrilege, Tertullian answers that Christians are justified in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Ebert (Leipzig, 1870), Reck (in the *Tübinger Quartalschrift*, 1868), Schwenk (in the *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.*, 1883), Schanz (in the *Rhein. Mus.*, 50, 1895), Norden (in the *Greifswalder Universitäts Programm*, 1897). All these maintain the priority of the Octavius. The contrary opinion has recently been defended by Massebieau in the *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 15, 1887.



refusing to worship the heathen gods, since these, by the admission of the heathen themselves, were originally only men, and so are no true gods. Then he mocks at the worship of idols, the follies and immorality of the mythology, and the immorality associated with the worship of the gods, and defends the Christian adoration of the Cross against heathen misunderstanding by some very forced arguments.

In chapter xvii. begins the positive exposition of the Christian belief in the one God and Creator of the world, who because of His infinity is indeed incomprehensible to us and known only to Himself, but who has revealed Himself by the greatness of His works, by the testimony of our "naturally Christian soul," and by the preaching of the prophets, who were filled with the Divine Spirit, whom He has sent forth into the world from the beginning as witnesses of His government of the world and His retributive justice, and whose discourses are preserved in the holy Scriptures (of the Old Testament) and through the LXX. translation have been made accessible to all nations. The authority of these writings rests in part on their high antiquity—Moses is more than five hundred years earlier than Homer—partly on their Divine majesty, the proof of which lies in the fulfilment of their prophecies (xx.). The faith of the Christians in these Scriptures is shared by the Jews, to whom, because of the pre-eminent righteousness of their Patriarchs, this revelation by Divine voices was vouchsafed in ancient times; but now God has cast them off for their unfaithfulness, and, as the prophets long ago foretold, has conferred His grace upon more faithful worshippers from among all

nations. It was as the author and teacher of this (new) grace and moral teaching, as the enlightener and leader of the human race, that the son of God, Christ, was made known. But He is not a "son of God" in the impure sense of the heathen myths of the sons of the gods. The Logos, who, according to Zeno also, was the framer of the world, was, according to our doctrine, brought forth out of God as a special spiritual substance, therefore begotten (*prolatum et prolatione generatum*), and is in this sense called Son of God, and God, in virtue of unity of nature as spirit. And as the ray which goes forth from the sun is not divided from it, but the sun is present in the ray, so also the Son who goes forth from God is not numerically distinct from God, but both are one, distinguished only by the manner of their being. "This ray of God sank into the bosom of a virgin,<sup>1</sup> and was there fashioned into flesh, and born as a God-Man (*homo Deo mixtus*). The flesh, thus endowed with spirit, takes nourishment, grows, speaks, learns, works, and is Christ. Let this fable stand in the meantime—it is like your own—until we show how Christ is proved. Those who among you have woven in advance similar fables in order to destroy the truth, knew as well as the Jews that Christ should come, for the prophets spoke of Him.<sup>2</sup> The Jews are still waiting the coming of their Messiah, but will not hear of his having come in the human lowliness of Jesus. As they held Jesus to be a mere man, they supposed His miracles, by which He proved

<sup>1</sup> This conception of the process of incarnation corresponds so exactly, even to the phrase, with the Buddhist legend, that the hypothesis of influence from that direction is quite justifiable.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Justin, *Apol.*, I. liv. ff.; *Dial.*, lxix. f.

Himself to be the Logos and the First-born of God, to be produced by magic, and, embittered by his teaching against the scribes and rulers of the Jews, with which the populace sided, they forced the procurator Pontius Pilate to crucify Him." The author goes on to mention the miracles at the death, the resurrection, and the ascension, as told in Matthew and Luke, adding that Pilate had sent a report about all this to the Emperor Tiberius, and that records were to be found in the Roman archives. In view of this, Tertullian thinks the Emperors would have believed in Christ, had not Emperors been necessary to the world, or had it been possible for Christians to be Emperors. This theological chapter (xxi.) concludes with the solemn declaration: "We say openly, and cry it aloud even amid tortures, that we worship God through Christ. Hold Him to be a man if you will, God wills to be known and worshipped through Him and in Him!" As the Jews have learnt their religion from Moses, the Greeks from Orpheus, Musæus and others, the Romans from Numa Pompilius, so it may be permitted to Christ to explain the Deity as something especially pertaining to Him (*commentari divinitatem rem propriam*). And since belief in this deity of Christ proves itself true by its ethically beneficent effects, the worship of the heathen divinities, beneath which is concealed ancestor worship and the worship of demons, ought to be abandoned.

In chapters xxii.—xxiv. a further contribution to the criticism of heathen religion is given in the form of a demonstration that it is based on the deceit of demons who, by magic and divination, delude men into holding them to be gods, but who, when con-

fronted with the stronger power of the Christian formula of exorcism, are forced to confess their deception. Therefore the charge of sacrilege which is levelled at the Christians recoils upon the heathen, who worship subordinate spirits instead of the supreme God, whereas Christians, just as they recognise only one Emperor, worship only one God of all. Irreligion consists precisely in the refusal of religious freedom and compulsion to unwilling worship. It is a false assertion, too, that the Romans owe their political successes to their care for religion; on the contrary, they spring from their irreligion, for in every war that they have waged they have injured some god, in every trophy they have shown they have committed some sacrilege. And Rome had certainly long been great before she established the Capitoline cult in its pomp and splendour (xxv.).

In xxviii.–xxxviii. Tertullian deals with the reproach of disloyalty brought against the Christians because of their refusal to take part in the worship of the Emperor. Christians, he says, pray for the well-being of the Emperor to the true God, from whom even the Emperor has received his power; instead of material offerings they bring the greatest offering of all, and that which God Himself has commanded—prayer, going forth from a pure body, an innocent soul, and a holy spirit. They pray also for the maintenance of the Roman Empire, because they know that by its continuance the horrors of the destruction of the world are postponed (*cf.* 2 Thess. ii. 6 f.). On the other hand, Christians do not swear by the Genius of the Emperor, and do not call him a god, because they cannot lie, and do not venture to make the

Emperor ridiculous. He would not himself—would he?—desire to have himself called a god; the great, God-given name of “Emperor” suffices him; he who calls him a god denies the Emperor, who is a man. The Christian may call the Emperor a “Lord,” but not in the religious sense; he knows himself to be, in relation to the Emperor, a free man, who has but one Lord, the almighty and eternal God, who is Lord also of the Emperor. It is therefore from true piety that Christians refuse to give the Emperor lying titles of honour and to take part in the wanton revelry of the public festivals. Should public joy be expressed by public shame? Should that which is disreputable on other days be held seemly on the festivals of the Emperor? Whereas the Romans, with all their noisy Emperor-worship, are disloyal, discontented, revolutionary, the Christians, on the other hand, shun ill-will and ill thoughts against any man, and especially against the Emperor, whom God has placed in so high a station. And they are far from avenging themselves on their persecutors, as from their numbers they could well do; if they were to withdraw from the Empire to some distant quarter of the earth, all social life would be at a standstill and the world would appear as though dead. The Christians are so far from forming a politically dangerous association that nothing is more indifferent to them than the State. “We recognise one State only, the world. . . . What pleases you, we despise, and our happiness is not yours” (xxxviii.).

Here follows a description of the ethical life of Christians (xxxix.). “We form an association united by the consciousness of religion, by the godliness of our morality, and by the bond of hope. We come

together to the meetings of the Church in order, as it were, in our united strength, to storm God with our prayers. With such violence God is well-pleased. We pray also for the Emperors, their ministers, and the rulers of the world, for times of peace and the postponement of the end of the world. We gather together to examine the holy Scriptures when any present condition gives us occasion for anxiety and thought. And in any case we confirm our faith with holy words, establish our hope, strengthen our confidence, and are taught the observance of strict morality by the inculcation of the commandments. And there is not wanting exhortation, instruction, and godly rebuke. Judicial decisions are also pronounced with great solemnity as before the face of God, and it is counted a most serious disadvantage, in view of the future Judgment, if anyone has so trespassed that he is excluded from the fellowship of prayer and all holy intercourse. The presidency is held by proved seniors, who obtain the office not by payment but by (good) testimony; for nothing pertaining to God can be purchased for money." To the common funds each pays monthly, or at any other period he chooses, a voluntary contribution. These funds are not spent on feasting, but on the maintenance and burial of the poor, the support of orphans and aged people who are without means, in helping shipwrecked or exiled persons, or prisoners if they are confessors for the sake of the cause of God. "But this very beneficence is in the eyes of many a mark of disgrace. 'See,' they say, 'how these Christians love one another'—they themselves, no doubt, would only hate one another—'and how they are ready to die for one another'—they, of course, would be more

likely to kill one another. And our custom of calling one another brethren is blamed by some, doubtless because among themselves every name of kinship has become an empty phrase, a mere pretence of love. We are, however, your brothers also because of the common mother nature, although you are scarcely men, because you are ill brethren. With how much better right can those be called and regarded as brethren who have acknowledged God as their one Father, who are given to drink of one Spirit of holiness, and who, out of one womb of common ignorance, have awakened to one light of truth. Perhaps we are not held to be proper brethren because no [fratricidal] tragedy testifies to our brotherhood, or because we share as brethren our possessions, which with you are a cause of dissension between brothers. We who feel ourselves united in heart and soul, have no difficulties about community of goods; with us all is common, except our wives; the community ceases there, where alone others practise it." Then follows some scandal about Socrates and Cato. Next, the luxury of the heathen banquets is contrasted with the temperance and modesty of the Christian love-feasts, which are consecrated by prayer and meditation on the Scriptures. Such a meeting of upright, good, chaste persons is not a seditious gathering (*factio*) but an ordered assembly (*curia*).

The popular opinion that Christians were responsible for public calamities is refuted by Tertullian by recalling the numerous calamities in pre-Christian times, and he comes to the conclusion that, on the contrary, the innocence of the Christians and their intercession with God are the causes of a lightening

of the ills of the world. Moreover, the Christians find in the sufferings of this world, which serve as the punishment of others, only an encouragement and confirmation of their hope, for they have no other interest in this world than to escape from it as quickly as possible (xli.). The reproach, too, that they are of no use in this life is, Tertullian shows, groundless, for the Christians do not live as hermits, but take part in all kinds of social life, engaging in seafaring and military service, agriculture and commerce, and all kinds of occupations for the common good. It is only from festivals and theatre shows and shameful methods of gaining a livelihood that they abstain. They are therefore the only people who are truly innocent, because they have learnt true innocence from the perfect Teacher, whose authority is infallible and cannot be disregarded like human laws; their fear is not of a proconsul, but of God and His eternal punishment (xlv.).

Then he speaks of the superiority of the Christian truth, founded as it is on Divine revelation, to the teachings of the philosophers. These have drawn what is best in their teaching from the writings of the prophets, but have falsified them by their interpolations and made them uncertain and self-contradictory. In this connection Tertullian cannot refrain from assailing the persons of the philosophers with vulgar slanders. But he is justified in complaining that the philosophers are allowed to take all kinds of liberties with the popular religion, while Christians are persecuted and hated for the same liberty. He can only explain this as due to the hatred of truth, which approves the despisers and mockers of truth but hates anyone who for the sake of salvation strives



after the truth and faithfully practises it. Similarly the tales of the poets about reward and punishment (Elysium and Tartarus), and the doctrines of the philosophers about transmigration of souls, are esteemed as the highest truth, whereas the Christian doctrines of the resurrection of the body, the judgment, and the eternal fires of hell are laughed at as foolishness. Even if they are held to be false and mere baseless assumptions, it must be admitted that they are necessary and useful, because the fear of eternal punishment and the hope of eternal happiness urge men to improvement. "Therefore it is not well to call false, and treat as foolish, what it is well to accept. On no ground should that which is valuable be rejected"—a very significant remark as coming from an Apologist for the Church's faith.

The closing chapter (l.) compares the martyr-courage of the Christians with that of the heathen. Monuments are set up to those who have suffered for empty glory or for their fatherland or friendship, but those who suffer for God and in the hope of the resurrection are called madmen. But unjust persecution only puts the innocence of Christians to the proof and increases their number; the blood of the Christians is like seed that springs up. All the sayings of the philosophers which urge resignation to pain and death do not make so many disciples as the Christians, who teach by their deeds.

It is quite true that what was stronger than all the proofs of the Apologists was, from the first, the self-witness of Christianity in the deeds and sufferings of those who believed in it.

## EARLY APOLOGETIC WRITINGS

### CHAPTER XXX

#### THE EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS

THIS is one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful apologetic writing of Early Christianity, but we do not know either the author, the addressee, or the time of composition. Conjectures about the latter point vary between the time of Hadrian and the post-Constantinian period. The latter is certainly much too late, the former doubtless rather too early. The old tradition that Justin was the author is now generally given up. In recent times some have thought of Aristides, with whose Apology the letter to Diognetus has many points of contact; but these are not of such a kind that identity of authorship is to be inferred from them but only the acquaintance of the author of the Epistle to Diognetus with the earlier Apology of Aristides.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the relationship of the two Apologies, as well as the free manner in which the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Seeberg, "Die Apologie des Aristides" in Zahn's *Forschung z. N. Tl. Kanon*, v. 240 ff. According to him the Epistle to Diognetus is not earlier than the third century. Harnack (*Chronol.*, p. 514 f.) holds the time of Irenæus to be the earliest possible *terminus a quo*.

New Testament Scriptures are still treated in the Epistle to Diognetus, make it probable that its origin is to be placed in the second half of the second century. And on that assumption the possibility that the addressee was the Stoic Diognetus, who is well known as a teacher of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius,<sup>1</sup> is not to be denied.

In the introductory chapter (i.) the author promises to inform his reader concerning the religion of the Christians, which makes them capable of despising the world and scorning death, and to explain to him why they neither believe in the gods of the Greeks nor share the Jewish superstitions, and how great a love binds them to one another, and, finally, how it is possible that this "new race or common manner of life" has only appeared now, and not earlier; and he prays God to enable him so to speak that his hearer may be benefited by what he says. In the second chapter the heathen worship of idols is condemned, then (iii. and iv.) the Jewish sacrificial worship, the dietary laws, circumcision, the Sabbath, and especially the feasts based on the observation of the moon and stars, are described as foolish superstition and ostentatious officiousness—a condemnation of the Jewish cultus very similar to that in Aristides and the Preaching of Peter (pp. 401, 406), but more cautious, inasmuch as the charge of idolatrous angel-worship is avoided.

The defence of Christianity begins (v. and vi.) with a description of the Christian life. Christians are not distinguished in externals from other men, with whom they live together in the same towns and have the

<sup>1</sup> Krüger, *Gesch. der altchristl. Literatur*, p. 85. Cf. Marcus Aurelius, εἰς ἑαυτόν, I. vi.

same speech, garb, and general customs. They are distinguished only in their spirit and their admirable conduct. "They have their native lands, but inhabit them only as sojourners, they take part in everything as citizens, but put up with wrongs like strangers (who have no rights as citizens). Every land is their fatherland, and every land is foreign to them. They marry like others and have children, but they do not expose them. They have a common table, yet it is not common (since the food is consecrated by the prayer of thanksgiving). They are in the flesh, but do not live after the flesh; they dwell upon earth, but their home is in heaven. They obey the laws which are in force, and in their conduct go beyond what the law demands. They love all, and are persecuted by all; men know them not, and condemn them; men slay them, and they become alive. They are poor, yet make many rich; they lack all things, and abound in all things. They are dishonoured, and glory in their dishonour; they are culumniated, and are found righteous; they are abused, and bless; they are insulted, and they show courtesy. Doing what is good, they are punished as evil-doers; when they are punished they rejoice as though they were being made alive. By Jews and Greeks they are persecuted, and those who hate them can give no reason for their enmity. In short, what the soul is to the body, that are Christians in the world; as the soul inhabits the body, but is not of the body, so Christians indeed inhabit the world, but are not of the world. The invisible soul is contained in the visible body; so also Christians live in the world, but their religion is invisible. The flesh hates the soul and fights against it as a hindrance to its pleasures;

so also the world hates Christians because they oppose its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh which hates it, and the limbs (of the body); so Christians love the men who hate them. The soul is, it is true, shut up in the body, but on its part holds the body together; so Christians are held prisoners in the world as in a prison, and yet it is they who keep the world in existence. The soul dwells immortal in its mortal tabernacle; so Christians dwell amid that which is corruptible, waiting for the incorruption which is in the heavens. It is for the soul's good when it fares ill in regard to food and drink; Christians increase daily amid persecutions. God has given them so honourable a post, and they may not abandon it."<sup>1</sup>

After thus describing the Christian life as a wonderful phenomenon in this world, he turns in chapter vii. to the question regarding the origin of the Christian faith. It did not originate from human discovery or knowledge; God Himself, the almighty Creator, has from heaven implanted truth and the holy and incomprehensible Logos in humanity. It is not some servant or angel that He has sent, but the mediator of His creation of the world, by whom all things are ordered and to whom all things are subject. And He sent Him, not as a dreadful tyrant, but in meekness and gentleness; as a king sends his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Justin, *Apol.*, II. vii.: "God delays the destruction of the world because of the seed of the Christians"; Clem. Alex., *Quis dives salvetur*, xxxvi.: "All will be kept in existence so long as the seed—of the children of God whom the Logos calls the Light of the world and the salt of the earth—remains here below, and when that is once safely garnered, all things will immediately be destroyed."

son, so God sent Him to men to save and persuade them, not to compel them—for compulsion is far from God; to call, not to persecute; to love, not to judge. It is true He will (some time) send Him as Judge, and who then shall endure His coming? At this point the content of the Christian faith is described in its main outlines (viii., ix.). Before the Son came, no one knew the nature of God. The opinions of the philosophers, who held the elements to be God, are foolish. God Himself has made Himself known through faith, to which alone it is permitted to see Him. The Creator and Lord of All has always been, and will always be, the same, kind and true, philanthropic and patient. But so long as He kept His wise counsel secret (before the revelation given by Christ) He seemed not to trouble Himself about us; He left us to the dominion of our unfettered impulses, not because He took pleasure in our unrighteousness, but in long-suffering, while He was preparing the present time of righteousness; we were to be convinced by our own doings of our unworthiness, and recognise that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God by our own strength, but only by God's power and goodness. But when the measure of our unrighteousness was filled up, and it had become clearly evident that we must expect death as its reward, and when the time had come which God had appointed beforehand to make known His goodness and power—that it was from surpassing kindness that His supreme love had not hated and cast us off, but had borne with us patiently—then He Himself took our sins upon Him and gave His own Son as a ransom for us, the Holy One for sinners, the guiltless for the guilty, the righteous for

the unrighteous, the immortal for the mortal. For what else had availed to cover (to cancel) our sins except His righteousness? In whom else could we sinners and ungodly be justified, except in the Son of God? O sweet exchange! O inscrutable plan of salvation! O astonishing beneficence! The sin of many to be wiped out by the One righteous; the righteousness of the One to make many sinners righteous. After He had convinced us of the impotence of our own nature to attain unto life, He has now caused the Saviour to appear who has power to deliver us out of our impotence. In both He desired to bring us to belief in His goodness, that we might see in Him our Sustainer, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Physician, Understanding, Light, Honour, Glory, Strength, and Life, and might henceforth be no longer anxious about food and clothing.

The practical inferences to be drawn from this Christian belief in God and redemption are described in chapter x. Once more, by way of recapitulation, it is shown what the knowledge of God as the Father means: "He loved men, and for their sakes created the world, made all things subject to them, has given them reason and understanding, created them after His image. They alone are able to look up to Him. Then He sent His only-begotten Son to them, promised them the kingdom in heaven, which He will give to those who love Him. With what joy will this knowledge of God fill you? Or how will you love Him who first loved you? But if you love Him, you will imitate His goodness. Do not wonder that a man can be an imitator of God. He can, because God wills it. For to lord it over one's neighbour, to exalt oneself above those who are

weaker, to be rich and treat the needy harshly, all this is not happiness, this cannot lead to likeness to God, for all such things are far from God's greatness. But he who takes on himself his neighbour's burden, he who will aid the weak with that wherein he is stronger, he who by communicating to the needy that which he has received of God, becomes a God to the receivers: he is an imitator of God. Then you shall see while still on earth that God rules in heaven; you will begin to speak of the mysteries of God, will love and admire those who are persecuted for the sake of their faith, will despise the deceit and delusion of the world when you recognise the true life which is in heaven, when you despise the seeming death which is here below, and fear the true death which awaits those who are condemned to the eternal fire. Then you will admire and count happy those who endure the temporal death by fire, when you remember that fire hereafter."

With this the Apology concludes. The last two chapters, xi. and xii., are a later addition; they recommend the holding fast of the doctrine of the Apostles and the Church, and warn men against false "gnosis."

Not without reason has the Epistle to Diognetus been called a pearl of Early Christian antiquity, and put on the same level with the New Testament Scriptures. It cannot indeed be denied that the specifically Christian view of the world and temper of mind comes to stronger and clearer expression here than in the Apocalypse of John or the Epistle of James. The apocalyptic enthusiasm of the victory over the world is here purified from its sensuous Chiliastic dross and exalted into the



spiritual freedom and inwardness of a Christian heart which is blessed in God and overcomes the world by love and faith; on the other hand, the jejune Puritanism of the morality of James is vivified and exalted by the enthusiasm of the Pauline and Johannine religious mysticism.

What more particularly distinguishes the theology of the author of the Epistle to Diognetus from that of most of the other Apologists, and especially of Justin, is the subordinate importance of the Johannine thought of a completion of the pre-Christian revelation of the Logos by His becoming flesh in Christ, as compared with the Pauline thought of a redemption of the previously wicked world by the atoning sacrifice offered by the love of God in Christ. Christianity is here not so much the coming to perfection of the Divine seed which had already been present in mankind (the "Logos Spermatikos") as a wholly new creation, a paradoxical, unexpected gift of the boundless incomprehensible love of God to a world which was unworthy of it, which had only negatively been prepared for it, by the proof of its own impotence, not by a positive education leading up to it.<sup>1</sup>

This specifically Pauline view of Christianity had been re-emphasised by Marcion with great religious warmth, but at the same time had been exaggerated into a sharply dualistic separation of Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Cf. viii. 10, 11, ix. 4, ἀμελεῖν ἡμῶν καὶ ἀφροντιστεῖν ἐδόκει . . . ἃ τίς ἂν πρόποτε προσεδόκησεν ἡμῶν; . . . ὃ τῆς ἀνεξιχνιάστου δημιουργίας, ὃ τῶν ἀπροσδοκῆτων ἐνεργειῶν! ("He seemed to be neglecting us and thinking nothing about us . . . things which who of us ever expected? . . . O what inscrutable working, O what unexpected benefits!")

from everything pre-Christian. Now the author of this epistle is of course no adherent of the Marcionite heresy—he does not share his separation of the Good God from the creator and law-giver, or his Docetic Christology—but he is unmistakably touched with a breath of the Marcionite spirit. That appears not only in his one-sided condemnation of heathen religion and philosophy, which he has in common with Tatian, Theophilus and Tertullian, but especially in the radical rejection of the Jewish religion, the Mosaic cultus being simply declared a foolish superstition, without any recognition of a prototypal relation or educative function in regard to Christianity and without any mention whatever of Old Testament prophecy. This ignoring of the historical connection of Christianity with the Old Testament religion distinguishes the author of the Epistle of Diognetus from the other Apologists and Church teachers, and marks him as a spiritual congener of Marcion the ultra-Pauline, without necessarily implying that he was his pupil. Their affinity can quite as well be explained, apart from outward dependence, by a similar religious temper and point of view. The strong consciousness of the newness and incomparable worth of Christianity which was nourished by the Pauline theology would be the more easily intensified into downright exclusiveness in relation to all pre-Christian and non-Christian religion, the more the distinction between the old and the new tended to be weakened down, and the boundaries obliterated, in the consciousness of the average member of the Church.

## THE THEOLOGY OF THE APOLOGISTS

### CHAPTER XXXI

#### THEIR ATTITUDE TO THE ETHNIC RELIGIONS AND JUDAISM

IN the theology of the Apologists Christianity for the first time systematically adjusted its attitude towards the pre-Christian religions, and thereby not only affirmed and confirmed its distinctive self-consciousness, but also developed, extended and enriched its content. It is indeed the law of all life to realise itself in these two always connected directions: in the assertion of its own individuality by separating itself from everything other than itself, and by the development and extension of its own being by uniting with something other than itself, by appropriating from its environment that which is congruent to itself and transforming what it has appropriated into an assimilated element of its own being, an articulated portion of itself as an organic whole. The appropriation of new material is so far from being a restriction of its own life-principle, that, on the contrary, it is absolutely necessary to its maintenance and development. Only in the case where the foreign material was not transformed and assimilated would it have the effect of restricting and

injuring its life; if it is really assimilated it belongs as much to the content of the living whole, and can as little be thought away from it, as its original elements. The development of the Christian principle has from the first followed this general law of the development of all life. It is therefore to misunderstand the law of "evolution," which rules the Christian life as well as the natural, to reproach the early Christian teachers for appropriating religious ideas from their environment, as if they had in that way caused a stunting and injury to the nature of Christianity, instead of recognising that they thereby freed the Christian principle from the narrow limitations of the primitive Messianic belief, and raised it into the world-conquering religion of the Church. The release and development of the Christian principle was first and most influentially effected by the Apostle Paul, following in whose footsteps his pupils, the authors of the deutero-Pauline writings, and the deep-thinking Church-Gnostic who wrote the Fourth Gospel, proceeded further along the same lines. To these writers attached themselves most directly the Apologists, who endeavoured to present the outcome of the early Christian development of doctrine in a form intelligible to the Græco-Roman world, and in that way began its further development in the direction of Church dogma. We can distinguish two tendencies among the Apologists: some tend to emphasise more strongly the antitheses between Christianity and the pre-Christian religions and systems of thought; the others see in it rather the completion and fulfilment of an already present good. Yet this distinction is, after all, merely relative. In Justin the two tendencies are so combined that

they remain in equilibrium; among his successors, Tatian, Theophilus, the author of *Ad Diognetum*, and Tertullian represent the former; Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, and Clement of Alexandria, the latter. But even those who recognise some good in the non-Christian world are nevertheless penetrated with the conviction of the insufficiency of all heathen wisdom, and of the demonic corruption of religion and morals in the heathen world. On the other hand, the others, in spite of their pessimistic estimate of pre-Christian humanity, recognise the existence of certain traces of a primitive revelation, which can be restored to its original purity by Christianity. The point in which the Apologists in general are most agreed is their condemnation of heathen religion, which they think of partly as crass idolatry, partly as ancestor worship, partly as the worship of the elements of the world, and the cause of which they see partly in the delusions of a childish imagination, but especially in the deception of men by the demons. This estimate of the heathen polytheism had not only long been current in Judaism, but could appeal also to the heathen philosophy of religion, which had reduced the gods of the popular polytheism to demons, in the sense of semi-divine beings, powers and instruments of the one Deity. The Christians accepted this view, but understood the demons in the sense of evil spirits opposed to God (the origin of which is sometimes traced to the fall of the angels, Gen. vi. 4; cf. Enoch vi.-viii.), who have tempted men to apostatise from the true God and worship spirits who are greedy of honour and sensuous enjoyment. To deny the reality of such spirits did not occur to the Christians, who

believed that they recognised their influence both in heathen magic and divination, and more especially in the fanatical hatred of the heathen against Christians.

But in regard to the popular beliefs and cultus, similar condemnatory opinions had long ago been expressed by the Greek philosophers, who had set in opposition thereto purer views about the unity and spirituality of the Divine being. These deeper thinkers could not simply be put on the same footing as the idolaters; what position was to be taken up in regard to them from the Christian side? Might they, on account of their purer views about the Deity and the ethical service of God, be recognised as allies? Or should they be regarded simply as more dangerous, because more astute opponents? On this point the Apologists took rather widely divergent views. A Tatian did not hesitate to make use of the most vulgar gossip in order to degrade the most celebrated poets and philosophers; and Theophilus and the author of *Ad Diognetum* speak roundly of the folly of the philosophers, in whom they can see mere phrase-mongers and contentious sophists. Tertullian, too, thought he could not say enough evil of the philosophers, and did not even exempt Socrates from his calumnies. At the end of his scandalous chronicle he asks, "What resemblance is there between a philosopher and a Christian, the pupil of Greece and the pupil of heaven, the seeker of fame and the seeker of salvation, the wise in words and the wise in deeds, the destroyer and the builder, the thief and perverter of truth and its guardian and perfecter?" (*Apologeticus*, xlvi.). On the other hand, Justin, Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, and Clement take a more unprejudiced view, and admit in the case of the

philosophers Heracleitus and Socrates, Plato and the Stoics, at least a partial knowledge of religious and ethical truth. Of Heracleitus and Socrates, Justin says they lived in fellowship with the Logos and were therefore Christians, although they were held to be atheists<sup>1</sup> (*Apol.*, I. xlvi); of Socrates, that he had a partial knowledge of Christ, because Christ was and is the Logos who dwells in every man (II. x.); of Plato and the Stoics, that their doctrines were not foreign to Christianity, even if not exactly the same. And because everyone who, in virtue of his partaking in the Divine seed of reason perceived that which has affinity with it, has spoken excellently, everything that has been excellently said anywhere belongs to us Christians. It is true that all these writers have seen essential truth but dimly, by means of the innate seed of reason, and it is one thing to have only the seed and the copy according to the measure of our receptivity, and another to possess and imitate the thing itself by the gift of grace (II. xiii.). The knowledge of truth possessed by the heathen sages was therefore limited, dim, and uncertain; in the most important points they contradicted one another, and in no point could they attain to a complete certainty such that a man might live and die by it—no one believed Socrates in such a way that he would have been ready to die for his teaching (II. x.). The superior advantage enjoyed by the Christians is therefore that, in consequence of the supernatural revelation given through Christ and the prophets, they possess the truth in its complete-

<sup>1</sup> With this *cf.* Minucius Felix, xx., "Either the Christians must be held to be the philosophers of the present, or the philosophers the Christians of the past."

ness, and fully confirmed by Divine authority. Indeed, the prophets of the Biblical revelation seem in the end to be for Justin so exclusively the sole bearers of all religious truth that he sometimes represents even the partial knowledge of truth possessed by the heathen sages as borrowed from the prophets (I. lx.), though by so doing he certainly involves himself in a striking contradiction, in view of what he has said elsewhere about the universal natural revelation in the Logos (II. viii., x., xiii.). More liberal than Justin is Clement of Alexandria, who placed the Greek philosophy side by side with the Jewish law as two parallel forms of the Divine education of humanity in preparation for Christ, and therefore prized Greek philosophy as a still valuable propædeutic for Christians, by means of which the traditional faith is to be raised to an intellectual knowledge of Christian truth (*Strom.*, I. v. 28, vii. 37).

In regard to Judaism, the Apologists are at one in recognising its superiority to heathenism in virtue of its monotheistic belief, and they also agree in the conviction that the Jewish cultus has become obsolete since the coming of Christ. But in their estimate of this cultus, and the Jewish religion in general, their views diverge widely. In the Preaching of Peter and the Apology of Aristides the Jewish cultus is described as a worship of angels and of stars, which has erred from the truth of the worship of God. Minucius Felix says that the Jews have not profited themselves by their highly superstitious worship, with its temple and altars; the author of *Ad Diognetum* declares the Jewish sacrificial system to be a folly, on the same footing



with the heathen worship of idols, the rejection of food which God has created for our use to be wrong, the prohibition of doing good upon the Sabbath to be wicked, the Jewish pride in circumcision to be absurd, the keeping of the feasts according to the periods of the moon to be a caprice. On the other hand, according to Justin and Clement of Alexandria, the Jewish ceremonial law had at least a temporary significance as an instrument of education for the Jews, though now it is superseded by the law of Christ, which is valid for all mankind; and Justin follows Paul in showing from the example of Abraham that it is not circumcision but faith which saves men, and that Christians are the true Israel after the Spirit. The greatest weight is laid by all the Apologists, with the exception of the author of *Ad Diognetum*, on Old Testament prophecy, in which they see an immediate testimony, different from all human opinion, of the Divine Spirit, who moved the tongues of the prophets like musical instruments.<sup>1</sup>

That the prophets had foretold the whole life of Jesus Christ from His supernatural birth to His death, and after that the fate of the Jewish people, the calling of the heathen and the persecution of Christians by the hostile world, must, Justin thinks, be accepted even by the heathen as the strongest and most unimpeachable of arguments (*Apol.*, I. xxx. ;

<sup>1</sup> Athenag., *Suppl.*, ix., οἱ κατ' ἔκστασιν κινήσαντος αὐτοὺς τοῦ θείου πνεύματος ἃ ἐνηργούντο ἐξεφώνησαν, συγχρησαμένου τοῦ πνεύματος ὡσεὶ αὐλητῆς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεύσαι ("Who being raised to ecstasy by the impulse of the Divine Spirit, uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit using them as a flute-player breathes into his flute"). Theoph., *Ad Autol.*, ii. 9, πνευματοφόροι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐμπνευσθέντες καὶ σοφισθέντες ("Bearers of the Spirit who were inspired and made wise by God Himself").

*cf.* Tert., xx.). For to foretell what is future exactly as it comes to pass is only possible by the aid of Divine inspiration. It is true that the proof of this agreement between prophecy and fulfilment is based in Justin on very bold exegesis, but that mattered little in his day, when the sense of historical criticism and exact exegesis was conspicuously absent, and it is thus quite intelligible that the argument from prophecy was one of the most effective weapons of the Apologetics of the time. The authority of the Old Testament writers (Moses and the prophets) was strengthened by their high antiquity; Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, Tertullian, and Clement sought to prove by chronological argument that they were many hundred years earlier than the Greek poets and sages. This was the more important for them as they thought themselves thereby justified in assuming a literary dependence of the heathen sages on Moses and the prophets. Nevertheless, the chief ground for the authority as bearers of revelation which was ascribed to the Old Testament prophets (including Moses) lay in the religious value of the monotheistic doctrines of God, creation, providence, and retribution, to which they testified so clearly and unanimously. In the writings of the prophets men found, as Justin and Tatian bear witness from their own experience,<sup>1</sup> the clear and simple answer, which they had sought in vain amid the contradictions of the philosophers, to the questions about God, the origin of the world, the destiny and hopes of man, and by this revelation they felt themselves freed from the bondage of the world with its numberless tyrants. This religious experience of the liberating power of

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Dial.*, ii.-vii.; Tatian, *Or. ad Græc.*, xxix.

the Biblical belief in God was then, as always, the real "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" which lay behind the argument from prophecy and the argument from miracle (the latter was first treated in detail by Origen) as the deciding motive. The monotheistic doctrine of God, the creation and administration of the world by the will of God which was directed to ethical ends, the pure and universally applicable system of morality, and the hope of eternal life—all this, supported by the old prophetic revelation and confirmed by the historical appearing of Christ the Son of God, in which Jewish prophecy as well as the dim presentiments of truth possessed by the heathen had received their fulfilment; this is the essential content of the theology of the Apologists and of the Church of their time. What is specifically Christian finds expression in the Apologists chiefly in the form of an ethical temper—self-denial, victory over the world, hope of heaven—rather than as dogmatic theory. The latter is in general little developed, though it is never wholly wanting; it is still implicit in the central germ-cell of Christian dogmatics—that is to say, in the conception of Christ as the incarnate Son of God or Logos, through whom the Divine endowment of human nature came to realisation, the dominion of the demons was overthrown, the beginning of a new life was given even in the present, and its fulfilment in the future was guaranteed. Anyone who has considered the central significance of this view of Christ, and takes it in conjunction with the ethical tone and temper which meet us in all the writings of the Apologists, will hardly be in a position to agree with the severe condemnation of the Christianity of the Apologists which is fashionable at the present day.

## THE THEOLOGY OF THE APOLOGISTS

### CHAPTER XXXII

#### DOCTRINE OF GOD. THE TRINITY

THE estimate of the Apologists' doctrine of God, which regards it as more heathen than Christian, rests on a very superficial understanding of it and the application of very arbitrary dogmatic standards. It is, on the contrary, precisely in their doctrine of God that the Apologists show an admirable insight into the newness of the Christian religion, which reveals itself as the absolute religion in the very fact that it supersedes by its higher truth the defective heathen and Jewish ideas of God. As against the heathen polytheism, the Apologists emphasise the unity of God, which manifests itself in the unity of the world-order ; as against the finite spatial and temporal limitations, the mutability, materiality, subjection to need, and ethical imperfection of the heathen gods, they teach the infinity, eternity, aseity, immutability, pure spirituality, freedom from all needs, self-sufficiency, ethical perfection, goodness and love of God. God can be known only from His working in the world, and (Tertullian adds) in our souls ; His nature in itself is neither apprehensible by our senses nor comprehensible by our intellect. Therefore He

cannot be known by any special name such as should exhaustively describe His nature and thereby necessarily limit it. We can only say of Him that He is the spiritual being which is complete in itself and the cause of all that exists ("the Father of all things"), and especially of moral good ("the Father of all virtues"), infinitely exalted above all creaturely existence, all temporal becoming, all material needs, and all ethical imperfections.<sup>1</sup> It is greatly to the honour of these early teachers that they made so strenuous an effort to make the absoluteness of God a real thing, and to think away all limitations from His being. The critics who reproach them with not thinking in a Christian fashion about God, only show by that that they themselves do not think about Him in any real sense at all.<sup>2</sup> It is, moreover, remarkable that on this point the Greek and Latin Apologists are in complete agreement. From Minucius Felix (*Octav.*, xviii.) comes the fine saying—varied a little in Tertullian (*Apol.*, xvii.)—"Only God Himself knows the greatness of God. Our heart is too small to understand it; therefore we shall only comprehend Him worthily when we declare Him incomprehensible."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Justin, *Apol.*, I. vi., II. vi., *Dial.*, cxxvii.; Aristides, *Apol.*, i. 2-6; Athenag., *Suppl.*, iv., x., xvi.; Theoph., *Ad Autol.*, i. 3, ii. 10; Minuc. Fel., *Oct.*, xviii., xxxii.; Tertullian, *Apolog.*, xvii.; *Ad Diogn.*, viii., ix.; Clem. Al., *Strom.*, V. xii. 82 f.

<sup>2</sup> Engelhardt (*Das Christentum Justins*, pp. 467-473) bases his charge against Justin of thinking in a heathen fashion on the point, among others, that this Apologist (*Dial.*, cxxvii.) makes the walking and talking of God in the Genesis stories not refer to God Himself, because He cannot move in space or converse as a man with men. It appears, therefore, that to the "modern" critic this naïve anthropomorphism of the early legend seems to be a necessary part of the genuine Christian doctrine of God. With naïve dogmatism of this kind it is impossible to argue.

While Clement says (*Strom.*, V. xii. 82): "How can that be comprehended in words which is neither genus nor species, neither form nor atom nor number, neither experience nor one to whom experience happens, which cannot be called the whole, because that connotes a magnitude, and because the One cannot be divided into parts, and therefore has also no limitations? Therefore it is a Being without form or name. If we sometimes improperly apply a name to it, calling it the One, or the Good, or Intelligence, or the Self-existent, or Father, or God, or Demiurge or Lord, we so speak, not as if we were suggesting a [fitting] name, but only by way of doing the best we can; we use beautiful names, that our consciousness may have something to take hold of and not fall away into error. It is impossible, too, to grasp it by deductive knowledge, because this is derived from what is prior and better known, for to the Unbegotten nothing is prior. Nothing remains therefore, but by the grace of God, and the Logos who comes from Him alone, to know the unknown [Divine] Being."

This suggests the other side of the Apologists' doctrine of God. The God who in His infinite being is exalted above the world and time and is incomprehensible, is at the same time the God who reveals himself by His activity in the world and time, and as such is called the Logos or Son of God. The Apologists are accustomed to distinguish between the Logos who dwells in God and the Logos who has gone forth from Him, the Logos who forms the world and reveals Himself in the world. Originally, before the creation of the world, the Logos was in God as a Reason-force (*λογική δύναμις*), as Justin and

Tatian say, as "Idea and Energy" according to Athenagoras—that is, as a principle at once ideal and real, the prototype of the world and the force which realises it; as God's own understanding and knowledge, according to Theophilus.<sup>1</sup> Then God caused Him to go forth from Himself by an act of will, begot Him, so that He became an independent Being, distinct from the Father, which as "the first Begetting of the Father" is called Son of God (Athenagoras), and is Himself called a God in virtue of the unity of His being with that of the Father (Tertullian), but also "the first-born work of the Father" because produced by His will (Tatian), "the first-born of all creation, the power and wisdom of God, the God begotten out of God," whom the Father sends whither He will to act in His character (rôle) in the world (Theophilus). The forth-going of the Logos from God is not to be thought of as a material begetting, nor as an emanation by which God empties Himself of His Intellect or by which His substance is divided, but on the analogy of the forth-going of the spoken word from the spirit of the speaker, or the kindling of one fire from another, which loses thereby nothing of its essence. And the position of independence given to the Logos by this forth-going is not to be thought of as a separation from the Father, for He remains still in fellowship and communion with the externalised Logos. As the sun's ray does not separate itself from its substance, but the sun remains in the ray and merely extends itself, so is the Spirit from the Spirit, the

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Dial.*, lxi.; Tatian, *Or. ad Græc.*, v.; Athenag., *Suppl.*, x.; Theoph., *Ad Autol.*, ii. 10, 22; Tertull., *Apol.*, xxi.

God from the God,<sup>1</sup> not numerically distinct, but only in regard to mode of existence; He has not separated Himself from His primal source, but arisen out of Him; the Father and the Son who has gone forth from Him, are both one.<sup>2</sup>

Along with the Father and the Son there is mention in the third place of the Holy or prophetic Spirit as an object of Christian worship, but His relation to them is still quite undefined. In Athenagoras (*Suppl.*, x.) He is called an "effluence" (ἀπόρροια) of God which streams forth like a sunbeam and returns back—an expression which seems to leave the independent hypostasis of the Spirit at least doubtful. In the same passage the host of the angels is mentioned immediately after Him, and in Justin, in one place (*Apol.*, I. vi.), it even precedes Him, so that the Spirit only appears in the fourth place. Theophilus (*Ad Autol.*, ii. 15) speaks of the triad of God and His Logos and His Wisdom, where the Divine Wisdom (*cf.* Prov. viii. 27) is identified with the

<sup>1</sup> Theoph., ii. 22, οὐ κενωθείς αὐτὸς τοῦ λόγου, ἀλλὰ λόγον γεννήσας καὶ τῷ λόγῳ αὐτοῦ διὰ παντὸς ὁμιλῶν ("Not Himself becoming emptied of reason (Logos), but, while He begat the Logos, He remained always in communion with the Logos"). Tatian, *Or. ad Græc.*, v. : ὁ λόγος προελθὼν ἐκ τῆς πατρὸς δονάμεως οὐκ ἄλογον πεποιήκε τὸν γεγεννηκότα ("The Logos in going forth from the power of the Father did not leave Him who begat Him void of reason (Logos).")

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *Apol.*, xxi. : "Cum radius ex sole porrigitur, portio ex summa, sed sol erit in radio, nec separatur substantia, sed extenditur; ita de spiritu spiritus et de deo deus, ut lumen de lumine accensum. Manet integra et indefecta materiæ matrix, et si plures inde traduces qualitatum mutueris; ita et quod de deo profectum est, deus est et dei filius, et unus ambo. Ita et de spiritu spiritus et de deo deus modulo alterum, non numero, gradu non statu fecit, et a matrice non recessit sed excessit."



Spirit, while in ii. 10 both Spirit and Wisdom seem to be identified with the Logos Himself.<sup>1</sup>

This indefiniteness as regards the relations of the Trinity is very significant. The simple explanation is that originally Spirit, and Wisdom, and Logos were merely different expressions for the same essential thought—for the self-revealing aspect of God, or His immanence in the world as the world-forming Mind-force and as educative wisdom and love. To have recognised this immanence of the being and working of God in the world and man as the equally essential counterpart of His supra-mundane transcendence, and to have combined both in an indissoluble unity in the Christian doctrine of God, was the great merit of the earliest Church teachers. By this, two one-sided views were overcome in principle and raised to a higher unity—the deistic separation of God from the world in the Jewish religion, and the pantheistic confusion of God with the world in the heathen religion. In the Greek philosophy also both tendencies had been represented: the transcendence of God in the Platonic dualism and the immanence in the Stoic Monism. In the later Stoic philosophy of the Imperial period there is an unmistakable tendency to combine the two sides. What philosophy was seeking in the form of theory, Christianity had found in the shape of religion, because on the one hand it started out from the Jewish Theism, for which the lofty transcendence of God was a fixed datum; and, on the other hand, it

<sup>1</sup> Οὗτος (ὁ λόγος) ὢν πνεῦμα θεοῦ καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου κατήρχετο εἰς τοὺς προφήτας (“He (the Logos) being God’s Spirit and Principle and Wisdom, and the power of the Highest, descended into the prophets”).

recognised, both in the Person of Jesus and the enthusiasm of the faithful, the presence of the Divine Spirit as the principle of higher life which was immanent in man, that is, "God revealed in human form." The epoch-making advance in the religious knowledge of God was not too dearly bought even by the mode of conception—unsatisfactory as it was—which personified the Divine principle of revelation as a second Subject alongside of the transcendent God, and combined this personified Logos with the single Person of Jesus in a peculiar way which later on inevitably gave rise to all the difficulties of Trinitarian and Christological dogma. It would be doing the Apologists an injustice to make them responsible for this inadequate mode of conception: they found it already present as the outcome of the Paulino-Johannine speculation about Christ, and as an integral part of the Church's faith. It cannot, therefore, be said that it was the Apologists who first made the Logos an independent and Divine Subject and Son of God in the metaphysical sense: He was so, fully, in the Johannine theology, as has been shown in detail above. The distinction lies only in the fact that the Fourth Evangelist simply took the Logos as a datum and described His incarnation and its consequences in the life of Jesus, without speculating about the origin of the Logos, about His forth-going from the Father, whereas the Apologists advanced to this reflection, and thereby made a beginning in Trinitarian speculation. The advance to this speculation was, however, not due to idle curiosity, but was inevitably demanded by the problem which had been practically (even if only tacitly) raised in John—how the existence of a second

Divine Being, the Logos or Son, alongside of the one true God the Father was to be explained. An answer to this obvious question was required from the Apologists for the sake of their heathen readers, who when a Son of God was preached naturally thought immediately of their heathen myths about sons of the gods. Thus the Apologists were inevitably confronted with the task of placing the Divine Sonship of the Logos on a higher plane—clear of the analogy suggested by these sensuous myths—and explaining it as a purely spiritual relationship. And it must be acknowledged that they discharged this duty as well as it was possible to do, in view of the given presupposition of the independent hypostasis of the Logos or Son alongside of God the Father. They endeavoured to interpret the given religious conception of the personal Logos as far as possible in the sense of the philosophic concept of the impersonal Logos, which was not distinct from God “numerically” (as a second Subject) but only “as regards its mode of existence,” *i.e.* as the aspect of God Himself as revelation working in the world. What, however, prevented them from carrying through this philosophic interpretation of the Logos concept was the fact that they were bound by the identification of the Logos with the Person of Jesus, which was already established in the faith of the Church. From this it appears clearly how much in error those are who hold the Logos Christology to be a product of Greek philosophy—as if it would ever have occurred to a philosopher to personify the Logos and identify Him with a human individual! The combination is not philosophical but religious, and has its ultimate ground in that animistic manner of thought

which from the earliest times had been accustomed to hypostatise human states of consciousness as super-human spiritual beings, and forms of revelation of the Deity as separate Divine beings. From this had arisen, even prior to Christianity, the personification of the Stoic Logos as Hermes the messenger of the gods, with which is connected Philo's doctrine of the Logos as the Divine mediator of revelation. It was very natural that Christians should seek to interpret the impression of present divine Spiritual power which they had received from Jesus, and which their own enthusiastic experiences ever anew confirmed, by means of this already popularly current conception of the personal Divine Logos or principle of revelation—so natural that it would be surprising if it had not happened. For this natural proceeding Greek philosophy is in no way responsible, but it doubtless served the theological teachers as a means by which they might rationalise, so far as possible, this irrational mode of conception. It enabled them to interpret the miracle of the incarnation of the personal Logos in the single person of Jesus in such a way that it became a poetic representation of the profound thought that the Divine power of Reason in humanity in general reveals itself as the principle of all that is true and good, and as the power which delivers men and educates them to higher things.

## THE THEOLOGY OF THE APOLOGISTS

### CHAPTER XXXIII

#### MAN AND THE WORLD

A SPECIAL service which the Logos doctrine rendered to the Apologists was that it enabled them to refer the creation of the world and man and the pre-Christian revelation to one single Divine principle.<sup>1</sup> By this means, (1) the Dualism of the material and spiritual worlds was in principle overcome; it was recognised that nature was the work of the good God and therefore capable of becoming, and destined to become, the instrument and symbol of the ethical education of men—a thought of extremely far-reaching importance, of which, for a long time to come, it was scarcely possible for the Church to appreciate the consequences; (2) the relation of the pre-Christian revelation to the Christian was established on the basis that the former was related to the latter as preparation to fulfilment, and thus alongside of the recognition of the newness and

<sup>1</sup> On the question whether the world was created out of nothing or out of formless matter the opinions of the Apologists vacillate. The critics who (like Engelhardt) scent in the latter view a heathen mode of thought seem not to be aware that even Gen. i. 1 f. makes the chaos precede the Divine creative action.

originality of Christianity there was preserved its connection with the Old Testament stage of religion and, further back still, with the primitive revelation. This involved the rejection of the abstract unhistorical supernaturalism which comes to light in Marcion's conception of Christianity, and the assertion of the fine thought of a gradually advancing *education of humanity by the Divine Logos* which comes to perfection in Christianity. It is true that this thought—which in a certain sense anticipates the modern conception of evolution—was first clearly expressed towards the close of the second century by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian; but it is only the natural inference from the Logos doctrine of the Apologists, and they indeed often approximated to it. It underlies especially their favourite argument from prophecy, for if we strip this of its divinatory, mythical elements there remains as its kernel the entirely rational thought that Christianity is the fulfilment of all that the hopes and yearnings of the fathers of Israel, and beyond that of humanity in general, had looked to from the beginning. Especially does the thought of a teleological education of mankind by the Divine wisdom and love come to vigorous expression in the Apologists' doctrine of the Divine providence which has ordained the evils of the world as a punishment for the ungodly and as a means of testing, purification, and education for the righteous. No doubt Stoic ideas play some part here, especially in the case of Clement, and of Minucius Felix, who here follows exactly the footsteps of Cicero and Seneca. But it is not clear why this should be made a reproach against those Apologists. On the con-

trary, Christianity here shows itself with peculiar clearness to be the fulfilment of all earlier wisdom, by adopting the Stoic doctrine of Providence, but at the same time giving it a firm basis in the doctrine of the Divine creation of the world, and a supreme end in the realisation of the Kingdom of God. Apart from such a basis and such an end the belief in Providence hangs in the air unsupported. In connection with the latter, the striking idea of some of the Apologists deserves special notice, according to which God continues to preserve the world, in spite of its unworthiness, for the sake of the Christians, who are the final cause of nature.<sup>1</sup> Nature is therefore neither an end in itself nor the work of non-divine powers, but was created by God through the Logos and is maintained as the subservient means to the ends of the ethical world, the Kingdom of God. In comparison with this main point it is of subordinate importance that this administration of the world for ethical ends is thought of as mediated by angels, or (when it is a question of punitive action) by demons.

This poetic and religious way of visualising the action of the Divine omnipotence in the world was common to the Apologists along with their whole period, and anyone who would bring a reproach against them on this ground<sup>2</sup> must include in it the New Testament writers in general and even Jesus Himself.

The world was created for man's sake; man was from the beginning the object of the love of God,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Justin, *Apol.*, II. vii., *Ad Diogn.* vi.; Clem. Al., *Quis dives salv.*, xxxvi. (quoted above, p. 485).

<sup>2</sup> As Engelhardt seems inclined to do, *Christentum Justins*, p. 475.

created after His image, endowed with reason and free-will, and destined to immortal life in fellowship with God. Immortality is not a natural attribute of man, but depends upon his use of his freedom. By disobedience to the will of God he incurs death.<sup>1</sup> The special dignity of man consists in his moral freedom; by which he can choose between good and evil and so determine his own fate. This ethical aspect of the responsibility and free self-determination of men is expressly emphasised by the Apologists in opposition to the Stoic and Gnostic fatalism, and forms the self-evident presupposition of their exhortations to repentance and conversion. As this is everywhere the case in the New Testament, and must always be so in all Church exhortation, it is only a blind dogmatism which can extract thence an accusation against the Apologists of an unchristian or heathen way of thinking. Moreover, it has been pointed out above that in Justin human freedom does not stand in direct opposition to Divine mercy, because it rests from the first on a religious basis—on the partaking of men in the Divine Logos, the seed of which was implanted in the human race from the beginning and constitutes the essential relationship of man with God. This relationship of man with God has not been entirely lost even by sin. Men have, however, because of their sinful weakness succumbed to the temptations of the demons—themselves angels who have fallen by their free-will, and have consequently been subjected to death and the dominion of the demons, which is evidence of their moral degradation

<sup>1</sup> Theoph., *Ad Autol.*, ii. 27; Justin, *Apol.*, II. vii., *Dial.*, cxli.; Tatian, vii., xiii.; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, xxxvi.; *Ad Diogn.*, x.



and religious blindness. In this way man has come into a position at variance with his divine endowment and destiny, and has become in need of deliverance by Divine help. But his nature has not undergone an inner change involving the complete loss of his freedom to do good and the consciousness of his Divine destiny. On the contrary, there have been at all times, among both Jews and heathen, men who have kept their souls pure and have lived in harmony and alliance with the Divine Logos, as Justin says of Heracleitus and Socrates. Even Tatian is only a seeming exception to the general prevalence of this view. He says, it is true, that man, in consequence of yielding to the temptation of the demons, has been abandoned by the Divine Spirit and has become mortal and plunged in darkness; nay, even that he is only distinguished from the beasts by the possession of articulate speech, not by anything else in his life, and is not an image of God (vii., xiii., xv.). Nevertheless, even Tatian makes fallen man retain at least a spark of that Divine power; he speaks of men who live righteously, who by their obedience to wisdom draw to them the Spirit, with which they have affinity (xiii.), of the possibility of the conquered conquering death again by spiritual dying in faith and penitence, and urges men to seek again that which they have lost, to strive upwards towards union with God, and to espouse the soul to the Holy Spirit (xv.). If the capacity to do this remains to fallen man, he is not merely a "talking animal," he has not entirely lost the image of God which belongs to his original constitution; it is only that his higher nature has been restricted, oppressed, by the superior strength of the lower

nature, in which and through which the demons exercise their lordship. So, according to Tertullian also, the human soul is, in its uncorrupted nature, Christian, and witnesses to the truth, and it is only sinful sophistication which has clouded its natural consciousness of truth (*Apol.* xvii. and *De Test. Anim.* i.).

## THE THEOLOGY OF THE APOLOGISTS

### CHAPTER XXXIV

#### REDEMPTION AND THE NEW LIFE

THE deliverance of man from the dominion of death and the demons has been prepared by God's free unmerited love even from of old by inspiring the prophets, and it has at length been consummated by the fact that the Logos and Son of God has by His Father's will been born as man, in order as a teacher to reveal the truth, and by His partaking in our sufferings to bring us healing, to lead us up to God, to destroy the demons, and to effect the deliverance from death of those who believe on Him.<sup>1</sup> Of course we must not seek a pedantically correct doctrine of the atonement from the Apologists; they did not even lay any special stress on the so-called "saving facts." Where they make mention of the supernatural birth or the miracles of Jesus it is generally to say that they find in them a fulfilment of prophecy and a confirmation of the Divine mission of Christ. The main point for the Apologists was always the Person of Christ Himself as the incarnate Logos or God-Man, in whom our search for truth and yearning after God have attained secure posses-

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Apol.*, I. xxiii., II. vi., xiii.; *Dial.* c.

sion of truth and abiding fellowship with God, while deliverance from the manifold tyranny of the world, of the demons and of death, has been granted to us. That Christ as the manifested Logos has fully revealed the truth about God and man's destiny, is always what the Apologists chiefly emphasise; but that does not mean that Christ is for the Apologists merely a teacher and law-giver. For, above all else, truth is for the early Fathers not merely a matter of intellectual knowledge, but as the object of believing conviction it is a power which confers real freedom (*cf.* John viii. 32), the actual victory over the demons, which were for the ancient religious consciousness the personification of religious misery and moral bondage in weakness and sinfulness. Consequently, Christ, who represents in His own Person this liberation, and by His word works in the present, is also at the same time the God who in His Mysteries guarantees eternal life to His followers, and will one day bestow it.<sup>1</sup> This conception of the redemptive work of Christ is distinguished from the Pauline by the absence of the idea of atonement (which only appears in the Epistle to Diognetus), but scarcely differs from the Johannine, which in a quite similar way has for its *foci* the revelation of truth and the communication of life through the word and the sacraments. And why this should be un-Christian, as modern critics assert, I cannot understand. "But

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* Clem. Al., *Protrept.*, i. 7. The Logos at the beginning in the creation bestowed life as the *demiurge*, then appeared as *teacher* and taught men to live aright, in order finally as *God* to bestow eternal life; (i. 8): "The Logos of God became man, in order that you may learn from the man how man may become God."

then, the Mysteries! Are they not pure heathen magic and 'nature mysticism'?" Well, in my opinion it needs but little understanding of the history of religion and the psychology of religion to recognise that under the veil of the mystery-conception which is found in essentially the same form in Paul, Ignatius, John and Justin there is concealed<sup>1</sup> the profound thought that the incarnation of the Divine Logos and the deification of mortal man which were begun in Jesus, are constantly repeated and continued in the faith of the Christian community, whose sacramental ceremonies only, indeed, bring to symbolic expression that which is actually fulfilled inwardly in the devout spirit, which by faith and repentance ever anew conquers death and appropriates to itself the immortal life which is from God (*cf.* Tatian, xv. *fin.*). Later, no doubt, there came into vogue an externalising and "mechanising" of the sacraments into a cultual *opus operatum*, but in the teachers of the second century that was not yet the case; it is here still clearly to be recognised that the sacraments are nothing else than a symbolic, mystical form of representation and communication of the central saving truth "Die to live." Moreover, the doctrine of the sacraments forms not merely a pendant to the doctrine of Christ, but also a supplement, and in some sense a correction. That which in the type, the single Person of Christ, is regarded as a thing happening once for all, is in the sacraments experienced by the believing community as a constant inward occurrence; the revelation of God in the flesh and the exaltation of man to the possession of the Divine life, the incarnation of the

<sup>1</sup> *Cf. sup.* i. 414-423, 467 f.; iv. 231-239, 417 f., 437 f.

Divine and the deification of the human—in short, *the realisation of God-manhood* in the heart and life of the community formed of the children of God.

To suppose, however, that this deification of man by the appropriation of the eternal Divine life, as understood by the Apologists and other Church teachers, is a purely natural process, is a misunderstanding, in which the essential difference between the heathen-Gnostic mystery-doctrine and its Christian transformation is overlooked. From the former the Christian community no doubt took over the form, but only to fill it with the new ethico-religious content of the Christian idea of redemption. The redemptive force is not here nature-magic, but a spiritual transformation of men by the free personal appropriation of truth, in faith and repentance, in love and patience. Faith which “learns” truth from Christ, the change of mind and heart effected thereby (*μετάνοια*), its exercise in the activity of love and in the patience of suffering—that is the new life begotten by the Spirit and ever anew strengthened by the Spirit, and yet, on the other hand, it is not wholly new, but the restoration of the original possession of the human soul. It was, we might say, the realisation and unfolding of the Logos germ, or essential relationship to God, which belonged to its original constitution. This new life, begotten of the Spirit and displaying itself even here below in faith and love, possesses the power of maintaining itself indissolubly; it cannot perish in death, it is immortal life. And since for its exercise it needs an organism, it will receive at the resurrection a new body. The belief in the resurrection is very strongly emphasised by the Apologists. They base the possibility of the

resurrection on the Divine omnipotence, whose power of restoring to life they prove by many analogies in nature; its necessity they deduce partly from the postulate of retribution, which must deal with both soul and body, and partly from the teleology of the creation. Since man as a rational being was created for an end of absolute value, for the knowledge and fellowship of God, this purpose of the Creator guarantees his eternal continuance, which apart from the resurrection would not be possible (*Athenagoras, De Resurrectione*). The retention of the primitive Christian hope of resurrection was, moreover, also necessary in order to preserve the continuity of the faith of the Christian community, and to guard against the abstract spiritualism of the Gnostics, whose denial of the resurrection of the body was closely connected with their dualistic contempt for material existence in general. The Church, by regarding the material body as a creation of the good God and an object of redemption, preserved for Christianity the right of envisaging the world as real, and assigned to it the task of making Nature the organ and symbol of Spirit. On the other hand, under the influence of the Hellenistic idealism the Church began, even in the second century, to resign<sup>1</sup> the fantastic and dangerous dreams of an earthly Kingdom of Christ associated with sensuous happiness, to transfer the reward to the transcendental world of the future, and to prepare for historical permanence under the conditions of human society.

Just as the view of the world and the hope of the future in the theology of the Apologists was a compromise between primitive Christian realism and

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Apol.*, I. xi.; cf. the Johannine eschatology, *sup.* p. 240 f.

Hellenistic idealism, so in the ethics of the Christian churches as described by them we can recognise the continued influence of the primitive Christian enthusiasm beneath the forms of Stoic idealism. The primitive Christian and the Stoic ethics were from the first in agreement in certain common features: withdrawal from the outer world into a man's inner self, liberation of the Spirit from the bondage of sense, subjugation of the passions, contempt for outward goods and ills, cosmopolitanism, recognition of the dignity of manhood in all and of universal mutual obligation, inculcation of kindness and benevolence, philanthropy and humanity. But what in the schools of the Stoics was bloodless theory became in the churches of the Christians power and life. Here the ethical ideal acquired a firm basis in the authority of a revelation which, if only from the high antiquity assigned to Moses, surpassed all heathen wisdom, and which had received, in the ethical teaching of Jesus, the incarnate Logos, its confirmation and authentic interpretation.

And with this sanction of the moral law by the authority of a Divine revelation there were combined the most effectual motives of various kinds. Above all, there were the motives connected with the belief in the judgment and retribution; fear of eternal punishment and hope of eternal reward. It is idle to say that these are impure, eudæmonistic motives. No one who knows mankind from history and experience can deny that motives of that kind, in some form or another and in some degree or another, are necessary in order to give the demands of the practical reason the necessary reinforcement and secure its victory over the desires of the natural man.



Even the Orphico-Pythagorean and the Platonic ethics had by no means despised the motive of punishment and reward in another life. But it was Christianity which first gave this motive overmastering strength, by founding the belief in retribution on the authority of the revelation of Christ and apocalyptic prophecy. The belief that the Law-giver Christ was at the same time the heavenly Judge of the world, the Lord of life and death in the world to come, gave to Christian ethical preaching, as the Apologists unanimously testify, its incomparable force, and to the moral life of the churches its earnestness and power. And yet this was not the sole or the highest motive. With it was combined, if not so often explicitly, yet always audible as an accordant note, the motive of a grateful, answering love to God, who has made known His love to us by the sending of His Son and by delivering us from the demons and from death. Gratitude to God for this display of love towards us is often mentioned (Justin; author of *Ad Diognetum*) as a motive for imitating God in benevolence and beneficence towards our neighbour. Moreover, the consciousness of redemption expresses itself also in a heightened sense of personal dignity and freedom, and this sense of happiness becomes a lofty motive for what may be described as the ascetic side of early Christian morality. The Christian in his consciousness of his inner freedom guards himself with anxious care from anything that might involve him again in the toils of worldliness and sensuality, or of the demons (who represent both), from which he has just escaped. This asceticism is therefore not that of the Gnostic dualism. The Christian, as described by the Church teachers, does not hate or

fear the body, or nature, or the world about him, as such—nay, he sees even in the body a creature of God and a partaker in redemption and the life to come. He fears only the seductive charms which are associated with sensuous pleasure and the hampering fetters in which the heathen worldly life threatens to imprison his spirit, which has become free in God. This aloofness of Christians from the heathen worldly life, their “fleeing from the world,” rests, therefore, essentially on the noble motive of autonomy, the desire to preserve and assert the purity and freedom of the personal spirit, its godlike dignity (Min. Fel., *Oct.*, xxxviii.; Tertull., *Apol.*, xxxiv.). It is at this point that the Christian ethics come most closely into touch with the Stoic. But whereas among the Stoics this consciousness of freedom leads to the selfish isolation of individuals and to self-exaltation above the mass of weak humanity, the Christian is preserved from this by humility and love. He knows that he has not become free by his own strength and intelligence, but by the illuminating and liberating power of the truth which is given by God, by the saving love of God which is revealed in Christ. This consciousness of a salvation which we owe to God, delivering us from the bondage and impotence which is common to the Christian with all other men, gives Christian morality that element of humility which preserves it from the Stoic self-exaltation. And since this consciousness of salvation is shared by the individual with his comrades in the faith, it becomes the social bond of the fellowship of believers, of Christian brotherly love. That the Christians felt themselves to be brothers one of another because children of one Father and heirs of the same hope,

is a fundamental characteristic which runs through all the descriptions of their morality given by the Apologists. The Stoics, no doubt, said many excellent things about universal brotherhood and love to men, but they were mere sayings, with no power in them. In order to be realised in deed and in truth, "love to man" must in the first place draw its boundaries closer, must confine itself to the fellowship of those who were comrades in the faith. Within this at first still narrow circle, love to the brethren was translated from theory into practice, and became an inspiring sense of solidarity, of union, of mutual obligation, not only to aid one another in outward need, but to the spiritual advancement of each through all. This sentiment of love, in which each feels himself responsible for the well-being of the rest, and each is ready to bear his neighbour's burden as his own (*Ad Diogn.*, x.) was in fact a wholly new phenomenon, the most epoch-making in the ethical history of mankind, something quite distinct from the mere respect for human rights inculcated by the Stoics, or from the friendship of the Epicureans, the aim of which was mere enjoyment, from the fellowship of knowledge in the philosophical schools and the legal fellowship of states. It was the first realisation of an ethical fellowship having for its ends to work in common for the perfecting of each member and for the coming of the Kingdom of God for all. In this working in common for a highest, all-embracing good, the Christian Church had a positive, absolute end in life, such as was foreign to the whole of the ancient world. In devotion to this end, in loving care and work for the temporal and eternal well-being of the brethren, life, which elsewhere had

become barren and empty, had acquired a new content of absolute value, a task of which the greatness was immeasurable. No wonder that, judged by comparison with the value of the Christian end, not only natural goods, but the culture of the heathen world, appeared so far inferior that a tone of pessimistic contempt for the world seems to run through early Christian ethics. But this pessimistic turning away from the realities of the heathen world was only the necessary reverse side of an optimistic idealism, which not only looked forward hopefully to a better world, but in its faith in God the Father and love to the brethren had the impulse and the energy to work and to suffer for the coming of that new and better world. History has proved that this faith is, in very deed, "the victory which overcometh the world" (1 John v. 4).

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<sup>1</sup> For much help in the preparation of this index the translator is indebted to the Rev. W. W. Duncan, M.A., of Worcester. In view of the multitude of cross references, it is intended to include only references to (a) the treatment of continuous passages, (b) important remarks on detached verses. It should be mentioned that the *figures* of the references will not always be found in the text; e.g., where in his analysis of the Gospels the author begins a paragraph by referring to the contents of "the following section," the reference to that section has been given by chapter and verse.

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## ERRATA

### VOL. I.

P. 20, note,	<i>for</i> 1 Pet. iii. 13-19,	<i>read</i>	1 Pet. iv. 13-19.
„ 47, line 25,	„ Phil. ii. 10-13,	„	Phil. iii. 10-13.
„ 88, „ 6,	„ Gal. ii. 1,	„	Gal. ii. 1 f.
„ 105, „ 21, 22,	„ 1 Thess. i. 5, 13,	„	1 Thess. i. 5, ii. 13.
„ 190, „ 1,	„ 2 Cor. ix. 13,	„	2 Cor. ix. 13 ff.
„ 194, note,	„ Gal. v. 10,	„	Gal. iv. 10.
„ 249, line 29,	„ 2 Cor. v. 28,	„	2 Cor. v. 2, 8.
„ 254, „ 3,	„ Thess. v. 12,	„	1 Thess. v. 12.
„ 264, „ 29,	„ Col. ii. 17,	„	Col. ii. 18.
„ 272, note 2,	„ Phil. i. 17,	„	Phil. i. 27.
„ 273, last line,	„ Rom. ii. 14,	„	Rom. ii. 14 f.
„ 299, line 23,	„ this assertion,	„	his assertion.
„ 398, „ 29,	„ Phil. i. 5,	„	Phil. i. 6.
„ 423, „ 27,	„ Gal. vi. 11,	„	Gal. vi. 1 f.
„ 459, „ 10,	„ Ps. viii. 7,	„	Ps. viii. 6.
„ 460, „ 2,	„ 1 Cor. xv. 48,	„	1 Cor. xv. 49.

### VOL. II.

P. 10, line 8,	<i>for</i> v. 21 f.,	<i>read</i>	verse 21 f. ( <i>i.e.</i> ii. 21 f.).
„ 60, „ 6,	„ xii. 25,	„	xii. 28 f.
„ 75, „ 23,	„ verse 23,	„	verse 22.
„ 258, „ 4,	„ verse 25,	„	verse 5.
„ 325, „ 2,	„ question which,	„	question, which.
„ 347, „ 32,	„ xiii. 38,	„	xiii. 58.
„ 362, „ 9,	„ Matt.,	„	Mark.
„ 442, „ 19,	„ v. 30 ff.,	„	v. 39 ff.
„ 496, „ 17,	„ xii. 38,	„	xii. 37.

### VOL. III.

P. 283, line 16,	<i>for</i> xi. 18,	<i>read</i>	xi. 8 ff.
„ 295, note,	„ v. 39,	„	verse 39 ( <i>i.e.</i> xi. 39).
„ 380, line 28,	„ i. 2, 7,	„	1 Tim. ii. 7.
„ 451, „ 4,	„ 1-6	„	1-5.
„ 454, „ 18,	„ xv.,	„	xvi.
„ 474, „ 17,	„ xxi. 6,	„	<i>cf.</i> xxi. 6.

### VOL. IV.

Add footnote to p. 404, line 8, referring to the words, "whether towards the beginning or end of this period."

According to Seeberg, *c.* 140 A.D. He bases this view (1) on the political situation of the Christians—they are exposed only to calumnies, not to bloody persecutions as in the time of Justin, when Hadrian's rescript enjoining toleration had been forgotten; (2) on the archaic theology of Aristides—Christ= Spirit; there is no Logos Christology, no relationship to Justin's apologetic methods; and there are primitive traits in the description of the Christians, chaps. xv.-xvii.

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